



Elizabeth Warren ends presidential campaign, centering race on 2 men

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elizabeth Warren ended her once-promising presidential campaign on Thursday after failing to finish higher than third place in any of the 18 states that have voted so far. While the Massachusetts senator said she was proud of her bid, she was also candid in expressing disappointment that a formerly diverse field is essentially now down to two men. "All those little girls who are going to have to wait four more years," War-

ren told reporters outside her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as her voice cracked. "That's going to be hard." Known for having "a plan for that," Warren electrified progressives for much of the past year by releasing reams of policy proposals that addressed such issues as maternal health care, college debt, criminal justice reform and the new coronavirus.

Continued on next page



Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., speaks outside her home beside her husband Bruce Mann, Thursday, March 5, 2020, in Cambridge, Mass., after she dropped out of the Democratic presidential race.

Associated Press



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Continued from front

She planned to pay for many of her ambitious proposals with a 2 cent tax on fortunes worth more than \$50 million, an idea that prompted chants of "Two cents! Two cents!" at her rallies.

But that energy — and an impressive organization — didn't translate into support once voters started making their decisions last month. She failed to capture any of the 14 states that voted on Super Tuesday and finished an embarrassing third in Massachusetts.

The Democratic contest now centers on Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who is trying to rally progressives, and former Vice President Joe Biden, who is appealing to moderates. They are both white men in their late 70s, a fact that is prompting soul-searching for some Democrats who heralded the historic diversity that characterized the early days of the primary.

"I think we all have to really interrogate why being for someone other than someone who looks like almost every other president we've had, in terms of age and gender, why everything else is seen as risky," said Cecile Richards, the former president of Planned Parenthood.

While she said she will rally behind whoever emerges as the Democratic nominee, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also lamented the challenges facing women in politics.

"Every time I get introduced as the most powerful woman, I almost cry because I wish that were not true," she said Thursday. "I so wish that we had a woman president of the United States."

Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard is still in the race but faces steep odds and has won just two delegates in her quest for the nomination.

Although she's no longer a presidential contender, Warren will likely remain a force in Democratic politics and could play a prominent role in a future administration if the party wins the White House. Clearly aware of her power, Warren didn't rush to endorse either Sanders or Biden.

Warren suggested Thursday that she would take

her time before deciding whom to back. She didn't endorse Sanders in 2016 — something that infuriated some of his supporters — and only backed Hillary Clinton after she effectively won the nomination.

Top advisers who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations indicated Warren wouldn't wait that long in 2020.

Sanders wasted little time making an appeal to Warren backers, saying in Vermont on Thursday, "I would simply say to her supporters out there, of which there are millions: We are opening the door to you. We'd love you to come on board."

But the divisions among Democrats run deep. Toni Van Pelt, the president of the National Organization for Women, urged Warren against siding with Sanders and noted Biden's involvement in the passage of the Violence Against Women Act.

"She has a lot of leverage right now. We do trust her to make the right decisions on how to proceed. But we'd like her not to rush into this," Van Pelt said. "Sanders doesn't have a record. He's really, as far as we know, done next to nothing for women and for our issues and for the things that are our priorities."

After a strong summer, Warren's poll numbers began to slip after a series of debates in which she repeatedly refused to answer direct questions about if she'd have to raise taxes on the middle class to pay for universal, government-funded health care under a "Medicare for All" program. Warren's top advisers were slow to catch on that not providing more details looked to voters like a major oversight for a candidate who proudly had so many other policy plans.

When Warren finally moved to correct the problem, her support eroded further. She moved away from a full endorsement of Medicare for All, announcing that she'd work with Congress to transition the country to the program over three years. Biden and other rivals pounced, calling Warren a flip-flopper, and her



From left, Democratic presidential candidates Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and former Vice President Joe Biden, participate in a Democratic presidential primary debate at the Gaillard Center, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020, in Charleston, S.C., co-hosted by CBS News and the Congressional Black Caucus Institute.

Associated Press

standing with progressives sagged as Sanders stood by his unwavering support for government-run health care immediately.

After long avoiding direct conflict, Warren and Sanders clashed in January after she said Sanders had suggested during a private meeting in 2018 that a woman couldn't win the White House. Sanders denied that, but Warren refused to shake his outstretched hand after a debate in Iowa — which only further hurt her polling numbers.

By the time the campaign

turned to the South Carolina primary late last month, an outside political group began pouring millions of dollars into television advertising on her behalf. That forced Warren to say that, although she rejected super PACs, she'd accept their help as long as other candidates did. Her campaign, meanwhile, shifted strategy again, saying it was betting on a contested convention.

Warren said outside her house on Thursday that "gender in this race, that is a trick question," since any woman running for office

who acknowledges sexism is derided as a "whiner" and those who don't aren't accepting reality. But she nonetheless suggested her road might have been harder than that of the male candidates.

"I was told at the beginning of this whole undertaking that there are two lanes, a progressive lane that Bernie Sanders is the incumbent for and a moderate lane that Joe Biden is the incumbent for," she said. "And there's no room for anyone else in this. I thought that wasn't right, but, evidently, I was wrong." □

Trump administration to allow more seasonal foreign workers

WASHINGTON (AP) — An additional 35,000 temporary foreign workers will be allowed into the U.S. this year to fill seasonal jobs amid a tight labor market, the Trump administration said Thursday.

In expanding the number of so-called H-2B visas for temporary non-farm workers, the administration is siding with business groups and members of Congress who have argued that there are not enough Americans to fill many service-sector and food-processing jobs across the country.

"There are a lot of advocates, especially in Con-

gress, on both sides of the aisle that really push for this," said Sarah Pierce, a policy analyst with the Migration Policy Institute.

There is an annual cap of 66,000 H-2B visas but U.S. law allows the administration to set a "supplemental" allocation if needed.

The additional 35,000 is the highest under President Donald Trump, who has said the U.S. needs temporary foreign workers because of demand in the labor market. Last year, the administration set the supplemental visa cap at 30,000. In the two prior years it was 15,000, accord-

ing to the Migration Policy Institute.

A total of 10,000 of the additional H-2B visas will be set aside for the first time this year for people from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras because those countries agreed to help the administration ease pressure on the southern border by taking in people seeking U.S. asylum, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

The administration says it will take "significant steps" to address fraud and abuse in the H-2B program and will generally limit the visas to returning workers. □

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Tributes, protest mark 250th anniversary of Boston Massacre

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Ceremonies and a protest are marking the 250th anniversary Thursday of the massacre in Boston that helped spark the Revolutionary War.

A morning tribute at the grave of the five victims of the fateful conflict included a wreath-laying ceremony and musket salute.

The commemoration at the Old Granary Burial Ground in downtown Boston was the first of a number of events expected to take place across the country in the coming years to mark the 250th anniversary of America's war for independence, according to the Daughters of the American Revolution, which hosted the brief service.

Gov. Charlie Baker, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, the president of the Boston branch of the NAACP and others will also take part in an evening ceremony at

the historic Old South Meeting House, also in downtown Boston near the massacre site.

And other black and Native American groups planned a "death procession" protest from the massacre site to Faneuil Hall on Thursday afternoon.

The protesters want to rename the historic meeting hall in honor of Crispus Attucks, a man of African American and Native American descent who was the first person killed in the massacre.

Attucks is often cited as the first casualty of the American Revolution, and the hall, where prominent Bostonians debated independence from Britain, was infamously built by a wealthy merchant and slave trader. The groups are also calling for changing the state flag and seal, which depict a Native American man, a colonist's arm brandishing a sword and a Latin phrase

that reads, in part, "By the sword we seek peace."

The Boston Massacre took place on March 5, 1770, as a mob attacked a British soldier in front of the downtown Customs House on a snowy evening.

The soldier was among roughly 4,000 troops occupying Boston in order to enforce new tax laws imposed on the American colonies, according to the Daughters of the American Revolution.

British soldiers opened fire on the crowd, killing Attucks and four other men: Samuel Gray, James Caldwell, Samuel Maverick and Patrick Carr.

Two of the soldiers were eventually found guilty and branded. The victims were posthumously hailed as heroes, with thousands turning out for their funeral procession and their burial together.

The story of the bloody street brawl, meanwhile,



In this Tuesday, March 3, 2020 photo Samuel Ike, of Cambridge, Mass., left, dressed in the role of Revolutionary War-era African American abolitionist Prince Hall, walks past the grave with red flowers of the victims of the 1770 shooting by British soldiers, known as the Boston Massacre, at the Granary Burying Ground in Boston.

Associated Press

stoked anti-British sentiment throughout the colonies, thanks in large part to widely circulated engravings by Paul Revere depicting the British soldiers as the instigators of the conflict. John Adams, who defended the British soldiers in their trial and later became the

new nation's second president, said the massacre was when the "foundation of American independence was laid."

Four years later, irate Bostonians staged their infamous Tea Party, dumping British tea into the harbor to protest Colonial rule. □

Pelosi lambastes Facebook over Trump ad a week before census

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER** and **AMANDA SEITZ**
Associated Press

Facebook on Thursday started taking down ads for the reelection campaign of President Donald Trump that direct people to a survey labeled a "census," hours after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said people would confuse it with the once-a-decade head count.

Facebook said in a statement that it was enforcing its policies to prevent confusion over the 2020 census, which begins for most people next week.

"There are policies in place to prevent confusion around the official U.S. Census and this is an example of those being enforced," the Facebook statement said.

Earlier in the day, Pelosi had called the survey sponsored by the Trump reelection campaign, "an absolute lie."

"A lie that is consistent with the misrepresentation policy of Facebook," Pelosi said. "But now they're messing with who we are as Americans. I know the prof-



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., flanked by Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, left, and Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, speaks to the media about the 2020 Census and the concern for getting an accurate count in minority communities on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 5, 2020.

Associated Press

it motive is their business model, but it should not come at the cost of counting who is in our country." The ad says, "President Trump needs you to take the Official 2020 Congressional District Census today." Clicking on a red button saying "Take the Survey" leads to a website with questions asking visitors about party affiliation, whether they intend to support Trump and which media organizations they get

their information, among other questions. Similar mailings have been distributed around the U.S. On Thursday, four Democratic House members — Reps. Carolyn Maloney of New York, Jamie Raskin of Maryland, Gerry Connolly of Virginia, and Katie Porter of California — demanded in a letter that the Republican National Committee stop any mailings or online ads that resemble Census Bureau documents.

Census Bureau officials have been on high alert for online misinformation aimed at confusing people about who is eligible to fill out the form or how to properly file it, along with imitation websites posing as the official census site. The bureau has spent the last year forging relationships with the major tech platforms — Facebook, Twitter and Google — to put out accurate information about how the census works and yank misinformation about the form from their sites.

In January, Facebook began banning ads that discourage people from participating in the census or portray it as "useless." The ban applies to ads on both Facebook and Instagram, which Facebook owns. The platform also announced that misleading posts about the census would be subject to removal. Typically, the platform does not remove false or misleading content from its site, unless it gives wrong information about voting.

The Trump campaign on Tuesday began running different versions of the census ad on Facebook across the country from Trump and Vice President Mike Pence's official Facebook page. The campaign purchased thousands of the online ads that were viewed thousands of times before Facebook began removing them Thursday. Former Census Bureau director John Thompson said the Trump campaign has put a new spin on an old campaign strategy: For years, Republicans have sent fundraising mailers that mimic the census. Although it's hard to tell if those tactics have had any impact on the response rate to the census, Thompson said "the less confusion, the better" when it comes to the once-every-decade survey. Trump's ads and the Republican mailers could dupe some people into thinking they've already filled out the official census form, and if there's any consequence at all, it could be that the move

backfires on Trump's own supporters, Thompson said. "I don't know that they would want to have confusion," said Thompson, who served in the Obama administration. "It could have a reverse impact on the Trump administration, (it) could create an underrepresentation of their constituents in the census." Meanwhile, in the U.S. Senate, Democratic senators told U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, whose department oversees the U.S. Census Bureau, they felt misled by his testimony almost two years ago on the origins of a failed citizenship question. Ross was testifying Thursday before the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

The U.S. Supreme Court blocked the Trump administration last summer from adding a citizenship question to the 2020 questionnaire. The administration had said the question was being added to aid the Justice Department in enforcing a law that protects minority voters' access to the ballot box. But the high court said the administration's justification for the question "seems to have been contrived."

Opponents argued it would have intimidated immigrants, Hispanics and others from participating in the once-a-decade head count that determines how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is allocated and how many congressional seats each state gets.

"Your statements were totally false," Democratic U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont told Ross during the hearing. "There is now an avalanche of evidence showing you repeatedly pressured both the Justice Department and the Census Bureau for nearly a year to support adding the question."

Ross denied misleading the senators. "My statements were correct then. They were true then. They are correct now. They are true now," Ross said. Leahy responded, "The evidence we've seen shows they were not true." □

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'Simple greed': Ex-UAW leader Jones charged with corruption

By ED WHITE
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Prosecutors on Thursday charged the former president of the United Auto Workers with corruption, alleging he plotted with others to embezzle more than \$1 million to splurge on private villas, golf outings, boozy meals and horseback rides on beaches.

The federal government has been marching toward Gary Jones for months, after an embarrassing search of his Detroit-area home and a series of guilty pleas in a wide-ranging investigation of UAW leaders living the high life while representing blue collar workers. "We stand before you today because of greed — pure and simple greed. ... The charges against Gary Jones are offensive to the hard-working men and women of the UAW," said Steve D'Antuono, the head of the FBI in Detroit.

Jones was charged with conspiring to embezzle, to aid racketeering and to defraud the government. The document was titled a criminal "information," which signals that a guilty plea is likely.

Defense attorney J. Bruce Maffeo offered no comment. Jones was UAW president for about 1 1/2 years

before quitting under a cloud in November. Nine union officials and a late official's spouse have pleaded guilty since 2017. The investigation began with the discovery that Fiat Chrysler money from a Fiat Chrysler-UAW job training center was stolen. It then stretched to embezzlement of union funds.

The court filing against Jones describes a scheme to pocket cash and enjoy luxuries, starting in 2010, long before he rose to the presidency.

Jones and other officials set up accounts that were supposed to be used for legitimate conference expenses in California. Instead, according to the government, they used the money to pay for "private villas, high-end liquor and meal expenses, golfing apparel, golf clubs and green fees." Jones, for example, ordered more than \$13,000 worth of cigars from a shop in Arizona, according to the court document.

U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider recited a litany of other excesses: horseback riding on the beach, sunglasses, spa treatments for spouses.

"We are not done and I can't predict when we will be done," Schneider said when asked if more people

were being targeted.

The latest guilty plea occurred Monday when Edward "Nick" Robinson appeared in court. He was based at the UAW's Region 5 office near St. Louis, which was led by Jones until Jones became UAW president in 2018. The government said Robinson fraudulently obtained \$500,000 to \$700,000, giving at least \$60,000 to Jones.

Vance Pearson, another Jones ally from his time in St. Louis, pleaded guilty in February. He followed Jones to become head of the regional office.

The UAW expressed disgust about the allegations against Jones, who marched in Detroit's Labor Day parade last year, just days after agents seized golf clubs and more than \$30,000 from his Canton Township home.

"This is a violation of trust, a violation of the sacred management of union dues, and goes against everything we believe in as a union," the UAW said.

The union now is led by Rory Gamble, who has promised to reform the culture in the UAW's top ranks. As part of that effort, a Michigan vacation home built on union property for retired President Dennis Williams is listed for sale at \$1.3 million.



In this July 16, 2019, file photo, Gary Jones, United Auto Workers President, speaks during the opening of their contract talks with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles in Auburn Hills, Mich.

Associated Press

The UAW, based in Detroit, has about 400,000 members and is best known for representing workers at Fiat Chrysler, General Motors and Ford Motor.

Schneider said some type of government oversight of the UAW is possible when the criminal investigation ends. He referred to recent positive comments by the head of the Teamsters union, which emerged from oversight after 30 years.

"It could possibly be a good model here," Schneider said.

The scandal has caused tension between GM and Fiat Chrysler. GM filed a racketeering lawsuit against the rival, alleging Fiat Chrysler was able to negotiate valuable labor concessions with the UAW in exchange for payoffs at a job training center. Three Fiat Chrysler officials pleaded guilty, including the company's former labor relations chief.

A \$262,000 mortgage on a union official's home was paid off with training center money from Fiat Chrysler. □

Michigan lawmaker disciplined after sexual harassment probe

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A Michigan lawmaker was stripped of a committee chairmanship and ordered to undergo training Thursday after the state Senate concluded allegations of sexual harassment lodged by several women, including a legislator, were credible.

Republican Sen. Peter Lucido of Macomb County's Shelby Township lost his position leading the Senate Advice and Consent Committee. He will continue to chair another panel and co-chair a joint Senate-House committee.

The Senate had opened an investigation in Janu-

ary after a young reporter complained that Lucido made a sexist comment to her before a group of high school boys. A female senator then accused him of sexually harassing her at a Capitol orientation. A woman who works for a trade group made similar allegations. □

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Insurers will cover virus tests, but check if costs apply

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and TOM MURPHY

WASHINGTON (AP) — A day after Vice President Mike Pence assured Americans that lab tests for coronavirus would be covered by private and government health insurance, that promise appears to be less than airtight.

The bottom line: Medicare, Medicaid, and "Obamacare" insurance plans will cover the tests, officials said Thursday. Major insurers also said they will cover such tests. But people with employer-provided insurance should check with their plan because copays and deductibles may apply. State health departments will test for free.

"It's a common type of test, just like you get a swab for strep throat," Seema Verma, head of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, told reporters on Capitol Hill. "I think private insurance companies, it does depend on coverage. But like I said, this is something that is commonly covered."



Vice President Mike Pence with President Donald Trump and White House coronavirus response coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx, speaks during a coronavirus briefing with Airline CEOs in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Wednesday, March 4, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

Doctors and insurers stress that patients potentially exposed to coronavirus should not avoid getting tested because of concerns about potential costs. The board of directors of an industry group that represents big insurance companies said Thursday that member plans will cover tests ordered by a doctor.

"We will take action to ease network, referral, and prior authorization requirements and/or waive patient cost sharing," America's Health Insurance Plans said in a statement.

Translation: Call your insurance plan to see what particular steps it's taking and whether you qualify for no-cost testing.

In Washington state, where at least 11 people have died, Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler moved to dispel doubts Thursday by ordering insurers in the state not to charge copays or deductibles to people who require coronavirus tests. The directive applies only to plans regulated by the state.

On Wednesday, Pence made what's now looking like a work-in-progress seem like a done deal.

"With regard to the cost, let me be very clear," Pence said at a White House briefing. The Health and Human Services Department "has designated the coronavirus test as an essential health benefit. That means by definition, it's covered in the private health insurance of every American as well as covered by Medicare and Medicaid."

Some independent experts were flummoxed, uncertain that the government has the authority to order blanket coverage of a medical service.

"I'm not sure what he means," said Karen Pollitz of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. "I can't point to anything that would back that up."

"Essential health benefits" is a term used in the Affordable Care Act to describe broad categories of care. Under the health law, preventive services have to be covered at no cost to the patient. But that designation requires a formal evaluation by an expert task force, and there's no indication that has happened. And the coronavirus test might be classified as a diagnostic test, not a preventive service. Usually, patients pay some of the cost for diagnostic tests, through copays and deductibles. It's unlikely that a patient will receive only one test for coronavirus. A doctor also might order a chest X-ray or tests for bacterial pneumonia or the flu, also respiratory diseases, depending on the patient's symptoms. Administration officials say coronavirus tests should be widely available in the next few days, and Verma said the government wants the broadest possible access. Responding to a question about concerns, she said, "We're going to continue to look at that, that if it becomes an issue, I would say that's something we want to make sure people have access to tests."

With costs remaining an unresolved issue, Pollitz points out that the annual deductible for an employee covered by workplace insurance averages \$1,655, and double that for families. Most deductibles reset every January, and consumers generally don't satisfy theirs until May or later. Deductibles are higher for individual insurance plans. About half of all insured adults in the United States worry about affording their deductible, according to a recent poll from the Kaiser Foundation.

Research shows that people with deductible worries don't just avoid wasteful or unnecessary care, said Sabrina Corlette, co-director of Georgetown University's Center on Health Insurance Reforms. "They're actually not getting care they should be getting," she said.

Plus there are an estimated 28 million uninsured people in the United States.

The American Academy of Family Physicians says uninsured people should contact their local health department or a community health center for help. Call first, in case officials need to prepare for a visit from someone who may have the virus.

Insured patients who are worried about bills should contact their doctor's office or their insurer. They may be able to connect patients with a nurse or arrange a telemedicine visit to help decide whether an office visit is even needed. Insurers also may be able to lay out all options for care and what a visit may cost according to a patient's coverage.

Insurers may also ease requirements such as a large deductible payment for some care.

"Our first priority is to ensure our members have access to the diagnostic and treatment care they need, and we are continuing to work with our customers and policy-makers on this public health challenge," said Eric Hausman, a spokesman for the insurer UnitedHealthcare. □

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Gas driller pulls out of talks in \$5M suit against resident

By **MICHAEL RUBINKAM**
Associated Press

One of Pennsylvania's largest gas drillers pulled out of settlement talks aimed at resolving its \$5 million lawsuit against a resident whose drinking water was contaminated and who has spent years bashing the energy industry.

Houston-based Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. sued Dimock resident Ray Kemble and his former lawyers in 2017, claiming they tried to extort the company through frivolous litigation. Cabot also claims Kemble violated a 2012 settlement agreement by repeatedly "spouting lies" about the company in public.

Kemble, a high-profile fracking opponent who has traveled the country talking about his experiences with the gas industry, charges that Cabot is trying to shut him up.

The company, which has drilled hundreds of wells in the Marcellus Shale natural gas formation, pulled out of a settlement conference scheduled for Friday because the parties have made "no progress" toward resolution, Cabot said in a legal filing.

Kemble's former lawyers, in turn, accused the driller of failing to negotiate in good faith, calling its withdrawal from talks "an indication that this action was not intended to seek compensatory damages, but instead an attempt to harass, embarrass and annoy the defendants."

An email was sent to Cabot spokesman George Stark on Thursday seeking comment on the case, which, for now, remains on a path toward trial.

Kemble and others have long accused Cabot of polluting their water supplies, a claim that formed the basis of the Emmy-winning 2010 documentary "Gasland." State regulators held Cabot responsible for polluting residential water wells and banned it from

drilling in a 9-square-mile (23-square-kilometer) area of Dimock, a rural community 150 miles (240 kilometers) north of Philadelphia. Cabot, which has long denied responsibility, has been waging a fierce PR and legal campaign against Kemble and other fracking opponents who the company says are funded by deep-pocketed environmental groups to spread falsehoods about Cabot. The company, which is publicly traded, has said it sees the litigation against Kemble and his former lawyers as a way to defend itself from scurrilous attacks.

But Stark, who was deposed by the defendants' lawyers in January, was largely unable to identify specific economic damages suffered by Cabot as a result of Kemble's short-lived federal lawsuit. Kemble's suit had accused Cabot of polluting his water supply anew.

Under questioning, Stark asserted that Cabot's reputation was harmed by Kemble. But he added: "From the standpoint of the ongoing basis, I can't even ascertain what the damages would be," according to a transcript.

Documents filed as part of the case show that both sides are far apart in resolving their differences.

Kemble's former law firms offered \$50,000 to settle, asserting that Cabot itself could only substantiate damages of \$90,000 for legal fees it incurred in 2017. Cabot, in turn, offered to settle for \$3 million — the limits of the law firms' malpractice insurance policies. Kemble's current lawyer has not offered a monetary settlement, demanding that Cabot dismiss Kemble from the case.

Cabot has been aggressive about pursuing its lawsuit, forcing Kemble's fellow activists to sit for depositions and obtaining their bank records. In his deposition,



This Feb. 4, 2018, file photo shows Ray Kemble speaking with reporters outside the Susquehanna County Courthouse in Montrose, Pa.

Associated Press

Stark asserted that Kemble and others had perpetuated a "hoax" that gas drilling had polluted the water. At one point, the company

sought to have Kemble thrown in jail for failing to appear at depositions.

The judge overseeing the case has previously criti-

cized the company for its \$5 million demand, saying Cabot announced the large sum in order to generate headlines. □

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Judge: Dubai ruler threatened wife, had daughters abducted

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The ruler of Dubai conducted a campaign of fear and intimidation against his estranged wife and ordered the abduction of two of his daughters, a British judge ruled in documents that were unsealed Thursday.

A judge at the High Court in London found that Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, 70, "acted in a manner from the end of 2018 which has been aimed at intimidating and frightening" his ex-wife Princess Haya, 45.

Judge Andrew McFarlane also said the sheikh "ordered and orchestrated" the abductions and forced return to Dubai of two of his adult daughters from another marriage: Sheikha Shamsa in August 2000, and Sheikha Latifa in 2002 and again in 2018.

The judge made rulings in December and January after a battle between the estranged spouses over the welfare of their two children, but the sheikh fought to prevent them from being made public. The U.K. Supreme Court quashed



In this Sunday, Jan 17, 2016 file photo, Princess Haya bint al-Hussein, the wife of the Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, attends a press conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Associated Press

that attempt on Thursday. Princess Haya, daughter of the late King Hussein of Jordan, married the Dubai ruler in 2004, becoming his second official wife, the court said. Sheikh Mohammed also has several unofficial wives. The couple have a daughter, Jalila, 12, and 8-year-old son Zayed,

the youngest of the ruler's 25 children.

In April 2019, Princess Haya fled the Gulf emirate with her children, saying she had become terrified of her husband's threats and intimidation.

The threats continued after the princess moved to London, the judge said,

adding that the sheikh had used the apparatus of the state "to threaten, intimidate, mistreat and oppress with a total disregard for the rule of law."

In May 2019, Sheikh Mohammed launched legal action, seeking the children's return to Dubai, while Princess Haya asked for

them to be made wards of the British court and stay in the U.K.

The sheikh later dropped his bid to take the children back to Dubai, and fought unsuccessfully to prevent the court issuing a fact-finding judgment on his wife's allegations.

The judge found that Haya's allegations about the threats and abductions met the civil standard of proof on the balance of probabilities.

Princess Haya also alleged that Sheikh Mohammed had made arrangements for Jalila — then aged 11 — to be married to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman.

The judge said the hearsay evidence for that allegation fell "well short of the required standard" of proof.

Sheikh Mohammed, who is also vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, is popular at home and is seen as a modernizing force. He has, however, faced criticism abroad following reports that his daughter Latifa tried to flee the country and was forcibly returned. □

Van attack suspect admits to carrying out Toronto attack

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A man accused of killing 10 people when he drove a van into crowds of pedestrians on a busy Toronto sidewalk in 2018 has admitted to planning and carrying out the attack, a court heard Thursday.

Alek Minassian faces 10 counts of first-degree murder and 16 of attempted murder in connection with the attack on April 23, 2018. His trial is scheduled to begin in front of a judge, without a jury, in April.

Minassian told police shortly after the attack that he carried it out in retribution for years of sexual rejection and ridicule by women. His arrest drew attention to an online world of people expressing sexual loneliness, rage and misogyny after the suspect invoked an uprising by "involuntary celibates" and said he had

contact with a California killer who seethed at women for rejecting him.

Eight women and two men ranging in age from 22 to 94 died.

Prosecutor John Rinaldi read out an agreed statement of facts between the prosecution and defense.

"While driving the van in the said area, (Minassian) drove his van into, or otherwise struck, at least 26 people, 10 of those people were killed and 16 injured to various degrees," Rinaldi said.

The 27-year-old is in court for a pre-trial motion hearing where his lawyer, Boris Bytensky, is fighting over the admissibility of a statement Minassian gave to a booking officer shortly after his arrest.

As part of a standard set of questions, the booking officer asked Minassian if he had any illnesses.



Alek Minassian, top, is seen during a police interview in a still frame taken from handout video footage.

Associated Press

"Yes. I am a murdering piece of shit," Minassian said.

The defense concedes Minassian made that statement, but argues Minassian's constitutional rights — the right to remain silent — were violated.

Several victims and families of those who died in the

attack were in the courtroom. Some wiped tears away and others stared at Minassian when the video showed him making that statement to police.

Minassian later told police in a lengthy interview after the attack that he carried it out in retribution for years of sexual rejection and ridi-

cule by women. He told a detective that he was part of the so-called "incel movement," which is a fringe internet subculture that attracts males who are involuntarily celibate.

Minassian told Det. Rob Thomas that he saw himself on the bottom rung of society as an incel, and wanted to be part of an "uprising" in an effort to change his societal status.

"This is the day of retribution," Minassian told Thomas.

He also told the detective he had "accomplished" his mission.

Minassian conceded that interview in court on Thursday, which will now form part of the agreed facts in the case.

The judge has said the case will turn on Minassian's state of mind at the time of the attack, not whether he did it. □

International court approves Afghanistan investigation

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — International Criminal Court judges authorized a far-reaching investigation Thursday of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed by Afghan government forces, the Taliban, American troops and U.S. foreign intelligence operatives.

The appellate ruling marked the first time the court's prosecutor has been cleared to investigate U.S. forces, and set the global tribunal on a collision course with the Trump administration.

Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda pledged to carry out an independent and impartial investigation and called for full support and cooperation from all parties.

"The many victims of atrocious crimes committed in the context of the conflict in Afghanistan deserve to finally have justice," Bensouda said. "Today they are one step closer to that coveted outcome."

Washington, which has long rejected the court's jurisdiction and refuses to cooperate with it, condemned the decision while human rights groups and lawyers for victims applauded it.

"This is a truly breathtaking action by an unaccountable political institution masquerading as a legal body," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at a State Department briefing. "It is all the more reckless for this ruling to come just days after the United States signed a historic peace deal on



In this Thursday, Nov. 7, 2019 file image the International Criminal Court, or ICC, is seen in The Hague, Netherlands.

Associated Press

Afghanistan, which is the best chance for peace in a generation."

His comments reflect long-held distrust of the ICC by the U.S. government. In 2018, then-National Security Adviser John Bolton said the court — established in 2002 to prosecute atrocities throughout the world — "unacceptably threatens American sovereignty and U.S. national security interests."

A five-judge appellate panel upheld an appeal by prosecutors against a pretrial chamber's rejection in April last year of Bensouda's request to open a probe in Afghanistan.

While acknowledging that widespread crimes have been committed in Afghanistan, pretrial judges had said an investigation

wouldn't be in the interests of justice because the expected lack of cooperation meant convictions would ultimately be unlikely.

That decision drew fierce criticism from rights organizations who said it neglected the desire of victims to see justice in Afghanistan and effectively rewarded states that refused to cooperate with the Hague-based court.

Even though an investigation has now been authorized, the prospect of suspects appearing in court in The Hague any time soon remains dim. Like the United States, Afghanistan also opposed the investigation. Rights groups, however, welcomed the decision.

"The ICC Appeals Chamber's decision to green light

an investigation of brutal crimes in Afghanistan despite extreme pressure on the court's independence reaffirms the court's essential role for victims when all other doors to justice are closed," said Param-Preet Singh, associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch.

She added that the decision "also sends a much-needed signal to current and would-be perpetrators of atrocities that justice may one day catch up to them."

At a hearing in December, prosecutors argued that pretrial judges at the global court overstepped their powers by blocking the investigation. The appeals judges agreed.

"The Appeals Chamber considers it appropriate to

amend the appealed decision to the effect that the prosecutor is authorized to commence an investigation," Presiding Judge Piotr Hofmanski said.

After a preliminary probe in Afghanistan that lasted more than a decade, Bensouda asked judges in November 2017 to authorize a far-reaching investigation. She said there is information that members of the U.S. military and intelligence agencies "committed acts of torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, rape and sexual violence against conflict-related detainees in Afghanistan and other locations, principally in the 2003-2004 period."

Katherine Gallagher, Senior Staff Attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, who represents a group of victims of U.S. detention, said the decision "breathed new life into the mantra that 'no one is above the law' and restored some hope that justice can be available — and applied — to all."

Gallagher represented two men still being held in U.S. detention at Guantanamo Bay, Sharqawi Al-Hajj and Guled Duran, and the wife of a third man who has died.

Bensouda alleges that the Taliban and other insurgent groups have killed more than 17,000 Afghan civilians since 2009, including some 7,000 targeted killings, and that Afghan security forces are suspected of torturing prisoners at government detention centers. □

German bishops approve guidelines for abuse case payments

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's Roman Catholic bishops on Thursday approved new guidelines that likely will provide for payments ranging up to about 50,000 euros (\$55,700) each for victims of sexual abuse by clergy.

The church has been shaken in recent years by scandals in several countries, including Germany. A church-commissioned

report in 2018 concluded that at least 3,677 people were abused by clergy in Germany between 1946 and 2014 — more than half of them 13 or younger and nearly a third of them altar boys.

A top bishop has apologized for the abuse.

The German Bishops' Conference said at the end of a regular meeting Thursday that compensation payments would be decided

by "a central and independent body on the basis of an examination of plausibility."

Their level will be oriented toward awards by courts in comparable cases and toward the "upper region" of those awards, it said.

Such awards range between 5,000 and 50,000 euros "as a rule, and there are also sums that go beyond that," said Trier Bishop Stephan Ackermann, the

German church's point man on the abuse scandal. Until now, people could apply for "payments in recognition of suffering."

The bishops' conference says that payments totaling 10.1 million euros to a little over 2,000 people have been recommended since 2011, according to the dpa news agency — an average of some 5,000 euros each.

The new guidelines didn't

satisfy representatives of victims. They fell short of a recommendation presented to the bishops by an independent working group last year for payments ranging up to 300,000 or 400,000 euros each.

The details of how to implement the guidelines are to be worked out by this fall. The bishops' conference stressed that payments are "voluntary and independent of legal claims." □

India restores full internet access in Kashmir for 2 weeks

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN

Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP)

— Indian authorities on Wednesday temporarily revoked a ban on social media sites and restored full internet access in disputed Kashmir for two weeks, seven months after they stripped the restive region of its statehood and semi-autonomy and enforced a total communications blackout.

Internet access over mobile devices, however, will remain restricted to slow speed.

The restoration of the internet will remain in effect till March 17, a government order said. It gave no explanation of the time limit. A recent Supreme Court order had said the internet ban could not be indefinite.

The order issued by the region's home secretary, Shaleen Kabra, said internet access over fixed lines will be restricted to registered

customers.

A.K. Srivastava, an official at state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd., the leading broadband service provider in Kashmir, said it has begun implementing the new government order.

When it imposed the internet ban in August, the government said it was necessary to head off anti-India protests and attacks by rebels who have fought for decades for Muslim-majority Kashmir's independence or unification with Pakistan, which administers the other part of Kashmir. Both countries claim the Himalayan region in its entirety.

Digital rights activists denounced the tight internet restrictions and said they represented a new level of government control over information allowing it to further restrict freedoms in Kashmir. They were also criticized by lawmakers in Europe and the U.S., who called on the government to end the curbs.



In this Jan. 30, 2020, file photo, Kashmiri journalists browse the internet on their mobile phones inside the media center set up by government authorities in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir.

Associated Press

Authorities in January slightly eased the internet ban, allowing the Indian-controlled territory's more than 7 million people to access government-approved websites over slow-speed connections. They herald-

ed the decision as a step toward normalcy.

The portion of the divided Kashmir region that Hindu-majority India controls was already one of the most militarized places in the world before the govern-

ment scrapped its statehood, began pouring in more troops and imposed harsh curbs on civil rights and information, including a blackout on the internet, cellphones, landlines and cable TV. □

Philippine police chief, 7 others injured in chopper crash

SAN PEDRO, Philippines

(AP) — A helicopter carrying the Philippine national police chief and seven other people crashed after hitting a power cable on takeoff Thursday, critically injuring two other generals on board.

Gen. Archie Francisco Gamboa and the others were pulled from the wreckage by police officers on a village road in San Pedro city in Laguna province, south of Manila. Gamboa was injured in the shoulder and right arm but flashed a thumbs-up and said, "I'm OK" while being wheeled to an ambulance. In a video shown by the DZMM network, Gamboa later said from his hospital bed that he would report back to work on Monday and asked for prayers for those who remained hospitalized.

Two passengers — Maj. Gen. Mariel Magaway and Maj. Gen. Jose Ma. Victor



The site of a helicopter crash is cordoned off in San Pedro, Laguna province, south of Manila, Philippines Thursday, March 5, 2020.

Associated Press

Ramos — were in critical condition, while the rest, including the police spokesman and the police flight crew, were in stable condition, police Maj. Gen. Benigno Durana Jr. told reporters.

The aircraft took off from a police compound in Laguna and hit a power ca-

ble before crashing onto a road near houses, witness Glenda Garcia said.

"It was really loud and we ran away in fear because we thought the helicopter would move out of control in a circle and hit us," Garcia said, adding that power in her village was cut due to the crash. □

Pakistani Islamists accused of defacing pro-woman mural

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Dozens of seminary students

linked to a radical pro-Taliban cleric defaced a mural depicting two women painted by rights activists to commemorate International Women's Day in the capital Islamabad, police and activists said.

The women's rights-themed mural painted on the wall of a house near the sprawling Jamia Hafsa seminary was spray painted black Wednesday. The defacing of the mural came after a court earlier ruled that rights activists could organize a women's rights march.

Police said they have opened an investigation into the incident and so far no one has been arrested. Pakistani women plan to hold rallies across the country to celebrate International Women's Day

to bring attention to their efforts to seek better jobs, protections in the work place and end domestic violence.

Women's rights rallies are held every year and they sparked controversy last year when activists introduced a new slogan: "My body, my choice."

Pakistani women have largely been deprived of their rights since the country gained independence in 1947. About 1,000 women are killed every year by relatives in so-called honor killings.

International Women's Day is Sunday and rights activists in Pakistan plan to hold rallies to commemorate the day. Meanwhile, some conservative Pakistani women have vowed to hold a "Modesty March" to counter rallies of liberal activists. □

With hand sanitizer nearby, Dubai Comic Con laughs at virus

By JON GAMBRELL

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — As papier-mâché hand grenades and plastic assault rifles barely caught the attention of security guards, a health official in Dubai wordlessly watched over an infrared camera filming all who passed by — including a few scythe-wielding Grim Reapers.

Welcome to Comic Con in the times of the new coronavirus.

The Middle East Film & Comic Con began Thursday night in Dubai, a city of skyscrapers and nightclubs suddenly subdued by the outbreak of the new virus across the region. The wider United Arab Emirates has at least 28 confirmed cases of the virus, a small number compared to the 3,750 cases region wide, but the concern here is growing. Nationwide, schools and universities will be shut down for four weeks beginning Sunday. The few frequent fliers trickling out of Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel and the home of long-haul carrier

Emirates, say it is emptier than they've ever seen it. Meanwhile, a host of big events including Dubai's annual boat show and art exhibition have been put on hold.

But not Comic Con. As actor John Rhys-Davies — you know him as the Egyptian character Sallah from the "Indiana Jones" franchise — exhorted a crowd to become filmmakers themselves, the halls at the Dubai World Trade Center slowly filled.

For the uninitiated, anyone can come to a Comic Con in your street clothes. But many choose to cosplay, or "costume play," as a favorite character from a film, television show, video game or comic book.

An initial surprise came from an Emirati in the traditional kandora robes, ghutra headscarf and lifelike mask of Nemesis from the "Resident Evil" video game series. He played a guitar for happy Instagramers. Hand sanitizer stations stood at the ready nearby.

For the Nintendo-famed plumbers Mario and Luigi — rather 24-year-old Bibi Zu-

mot of Jordan and 21-year-old Mohamed Rashed of Egypt — they acknowledged that the coronavirus did come up in their minds as they attended. And if it hadn't, "my mom, my friends' mom, everyone's mom" had reminded them beforehand, Rashed said. Luckily, the two plumbers wear large gloves. Rashed substituted in two sets of latex gloves, which he snapped to show journalists.

"The gloves still work with the Luigi thing," said Rashed, who went as a voodoo doll to his first Comic Con.

Both Rashed and Zumot praised the organizers for having thermal scanners, hand sanitizer and medical staff on hand for the event. However, Zumot offered a bit more of a fatalistic view. "If corona gets me, it's going to get me!" he bellowed in his red overalls.

Others took a bit more of a cautious view, wearing off-character surgical masks or in-character protection like bandit masks covering the lower half of their faces. Most seemed unconcerned by the Grim



Two women wearing masks dressed as sword-wielding anime characters pose for a photograph at the Middle East Film & Comic Con in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Thursday, March 5, 2020.

Associated Press

Reapers moving through the crowd to the beat of pop music.

One cosplayer, who only gestured to a journalist when questioned, wore the long-nose black beak of a plague doctor. It didn't stop a woman in a mask from taking a selfie with him.

Stands sold pop-culture paintings infused with an Emirati vibe. A Batman next to a Dubai police officer getting out of a sports car. The DeLorean from "Back to the Future" in front of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tall-

est building, with the caption "Back to Dubai."

Other stands tested the germaphobe. A giant mockup of Thor's hammer, supposedly unliftable except for the worthy, found itself lifted and touched all over by every person wanting a photograph.

Deeper inside, those costumed took part in sessions of a dance contest to win prizes. They watched monitors for the moves, egged on by a master of ceremonies who may have exaggerated his qualifications. □

UN food aid chief fears for Africa, Mideast amid new crises

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — The head of the U.N.'s food aid agency warned of "absolute devastation" in Africa and parts of the Middle East in coming months if wealthier nations grappling with an economic downturn linked to the new coronavirus don't step up aid efforts in countries in need. David Beasley, head of the World Food Program, told The Associated Press that the convergence of several crises could further destabilize conflict-scarred regions.

"If the corona virus continues to create panic around the world, and there is an economic downturn, I have been telling the European leaders, and leaders around the world, you don't have enough money

set aside to address the needs in Africa, East Africa, West Africa, in the Middle East right now," Beasley said during an interview in Jordan late Wednesday, after a visit to Syria. "If there is an economic downturn, on top of the economic downturn that exists now in Syria and Lebanon, it absolutely could be a catastrophe," he said. "I mean absolute devastation. I am very concerned about what would happen in the next six months. You could see destabilization unlike any time period, maybe in my lifetime." In the Middle East, Iran has been hardest hit by the new virus which has spread around the globe after first being detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year. □

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Pérez de Cuéllar, Peruvian two-term UN chief, dies at 100



In this Mar. 28, 2001 file photo, Foreign Minister Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru, speaks to reporters during a pause in the session of the annual meeting of ministers from the Latin American Group of Rio and the European Union in Santiago, Chile.

Associated Press

By **FRANKLIN BRICENO**
Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the two-term United Nations secretary-general who brokered a historic cease-fire between Iran and Iraq in 1988 and who in later life came out of retirement to help re-establish democracy in his Peruvian homeland, has died. He was 100.

His son, Francisco Pérez de Cuéllar, said his father died Wednesday at home of natural causes. Current U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the Peruvian diplomat a "personal inspiration."

"Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar's life spanned not only a century but also the entire history of the United Nations, dating back to his participation in the first meeting of the General Assembly in 1946," said Guterres in a statement late Wednesday.

Ban Ki-moon, Guterres's predecessor as U.N. secretary-general, called Perez de Cuellar "one of the great diplomats of the 20th century."

The U.N. flag will fly at half-mast at U.N. headquarters in New York and at every U.N. duty station around the world on Friday in honor of Perez de Cuellar, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric announced Thursday. Pérez de Cuéllar's death ends a long diplomatic career that brought him full-circle from his first posting as secretary at the Peruvian embassy in Paris in 1944 to his later job as Peru's ambassador to France.

When he began his tenure as U.N. secretary-general on Jan. 1, 1982, he was a little-known Peruvian who was a compromise candidate at a time when the United Nations was held in low esteem.

Serving as U.N. undersecretary-general for special political affairs, he emerged as the dark horse candidate in December 1981 after a six-week election deadlock between U.N. chief Kurt Waldheim and Tanzanian Foreign Minister Salim Ahmed Salim.

Once elected, he quickly made his mark.

Disturbed by the United Nations' dwindling effectiveness, he sought to revitalize the world body's faulty peacekeeping machinery. His first step was to "shake the house" with a highly critical report in which he warned: "We are perilously near to a new international anarchy."

With the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and with conflicts raging in Afghanistan and Cambodia and between Iran and Iraq, he complained to the General Assembly that U.N. resolutions "are increasingly defied or ignored by those that feel themselves strong enough to do so."

"The problem with the United Nations is that either it's not used or misused by member countries," he said in an interview at the end of his first year as U.N. secretary general.

During his decade as U.N. chief, Pérez de Cuéllar would earn a reputation

more for diligent, quiet diplomacy than charisma.

"Le ton fait la chanson," he was fond of saying, meaning that melody is what makes the song and not the loudness of the singer.

"He has an amiable look about him that people mistake for through and through softness," said an aide, who described him as tough and courageous. Faced early in his first term with a threatened U.S. cut-off of funds in the event of Israel's ouster, he worked behind the scenes to stop Arab efforts to deprive the Jewish state of its General Assembly seat. There was muted criticism from the Arab camp that he had given the Americans the right of way in the Middle East.

In dealing with human rights issues, he chose the path of "discreet diplomacy." He refrained from publicly rebuking Poland for refusing to allow his special representative into the country to investigate allegations of human rights violations during the Warsaw regime's 1982 crackdown on the Solidarity trade union movement. In July 1986, Pérez de Cuéllar underwent a quadruple coronary bypass operation, putting in question his availability for a second term. From the outset, Pérez de Cuéllar had insisted that he would be a one-term secretary-general.

Upset with what he viewed as member states' reluctance to pitch in to help the world body out of a financial crisis, he told the New York Times in September 1986, "I don't see any reason why I should preside over the collapse of the organization."

But he did come back for a second term after a groundswell of support for his candidacy, including a conversation with President Ronald Reagan, who — in the words of the U.N. chief's spokesman — expressed "his personal support for the secretary-general."

"Just about all the Western countries have told him they'd like to see him stay on," a Western diplomatic source said at the time.

"There is no visible alternative."

Unlike his predecessor, Kurt Waldheim who was regarded as a "workaholic" and who spent long hours in his office, Pérez de Cuéllar liked to get away from it all. "He is very jealous of his own privacy," a close aide said.

"When I can, I read everything but United Nations documents," Pérez de Cuéllar confided to a reporter.

Once on a flight to Moscow, an aide observed that "in the midst of it all, the secretary-general had time for splendid literature." Trilingual, Pérez de Cuéllar read French, English and Spanish literature.

Pérez de Cuéllar spent much of his second term working behind the scenes on the hostage issue, resulting in the release of Westerners held in Lebanon, including the last and longest held American hostage, journalist Terry Anderson, who was freed Dec. 4, 1991.

All told, Pérez de Cuéllar's diplomacy helped bring an end to fighting in Cambodia and the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

Shortly after midnight on Jan. 1, 1992, he walked out of U.N. headquarters to his waiting limousine, no longer the secretary-general, but having attained his final goal after hours of tough negotiations: a peace pact between the Salvadoran government and leftist rebels.

"Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar played a crucial role in a number of diplomatic successes — including the independence of Namibia, an end to the Iran-Iraq War, the release of American hostages held in Lebanon, the peace accord in Cambodia and, in his very last days in office, a historic peace agreement in El Salvador," said Guterres.

Former secretary-general Ban said Perez de Cuellar's accomplishments, including forging the peace deal that ended the Iran-Iraq war and facilitating Namibia's

independence, "are thought to have led the 'rebirth' of the United Nations, in which cooperation started to be valued over division."

"As the protector of peace, believer of human rights, and advocate of development, he made long-lasting changes that shifted the trajectory of the international community to a better future," Ban said in a letter to Peru's President Martin Vizcarra.

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was born in Lima on Jan. 19, 1920. His father a "modest businessman," was an accomplished amateur pianist, according to the former secretary-general. The family traced its roots to the Spanish town of Cuéllar, north of Segovia.

In Peru, the family belonged to the educated rather than the landowning class. "He went to the right schools," a countryman at the United Nations once said of Pérez de Cuéllar.

He received a law degree from Lima's Catholic University in 1943 and joined the Peruvian diplomatic service a year later. He would go on to postings in France, Britain, Bolivia and Brazil before returning to Lima in 1961, where he served in a number of high-level ministry posts.

He was ambassador to Switzerland and then became Peru's first ambassador to the Soviet Union while concurrently accredited to Poland. Other assignments included the post of secretary-general of the Peruvian Foreign Ministry and chief delegate to the United Nations.

After leaving the U.N. Pérez de Cuéllar made an unsuccessful bid for Peru's presidency in 1995 against the authoritarian leader Alberto Fujimori, whose 10-year autocratic regime crumbled in November 2000 amid corruption scandals. At the age of 80, Pérez de Cuéllar emerged from retirement in Paris and returned to Peru to take on the mantle of foreign minister and cabinet chief for provisional President Valentin Paniagua. □

LOCAL



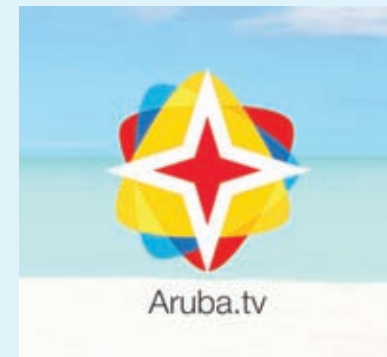
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Beth Israel Synagogue celebrates Purim



ORANJESTAD — Beth Israel Synagogue in Oranjestad is celebrating Purim coming Sunday from 6pm. They invite you to wear a costume or mask and they offer Megillah reading, drum circle and festival songs. There will also be a potluck dinner and Hamentaschen will be served.

Hamantash is a filled-pocket cookie or pastry recognizable for its triangular shape and usually associated with the villain in the Purim story. Purim is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, an Achaemenid Persian Empire official who was planning to kill all the Jews, as recounted in the Book of Esther (usually dated to the 5th century BCE).

Many Jewish people, especially children, in the United States use this event as an opportunity to listen to the Megilla (or Megillah) to relive the events that are told about the story of Esther, Mordecai and Haman. It is customary to twirl graggers (Purim noisemakers) and stamp one's feet when Haman's name is mentioned.

Be merry

It is accustomed that Jewish give to the needy around this time of the year. Food baskets or food gifts are also given away. It is a time for people to celebrate and be merry. So some Jewish schools hold celebrations to remember the past and their heritage. Other groups or organizations hold Purim carnivals filled with activities, costumes, food and games. Special prayers, particularly the Al HaNissim prayer are also included in evening, morning and afternoon prayers.

Purim has been celebrated in the United States for many years. Old newspaper articles dating as far back as 1860 have reported about Purim festivals, where wealthy Jewish families would donate to charity. It has been written in other newspapers, particularly from the early

20th century, that Purim was a day of cheerfulness and festivity among many Jewish communities in the United States.

About Beth Israel Synagogue

Beth Israel Synagogue is the synagogue of the Aruban Jewish community, located in Oranjestad, Aruba. Beth Israel Synagogue is an independent congregation with a liberal style similar to Reform Judaism or Conservative Judaism. □



A hero waiter



EAGLE BEACH — Sometimes life takes you by surprise and while you are enjoying your well-deserved vacation all of a sudden you're life is a balancing act. It happened to a guest of Ricardo's Restaurant & Bar. Luckily for this tourist waiter Dante Soleto jumped in and saved a life.

On Sunday, February 23rd, a guest visited Ricardo's Restaurant & Bar, located at the Aruba Beach Club Resort (ABC), and had choked on a piece of meat. Waiter Sotelo, quickly jumped in and provided Heimlich which resulted in saving the tourists life.

Unfortunately in all the hectic that fol-

lowed the tourists' name was not registered as they were not guests of ABC.

Heimlich via Discovery Channel.

Remarkably it was understood that Sotelo never had taken any courses in First Aid but learned about

ABC Board of Directors, Management and Staff awarded Sotelo with a gift certificate for his bravery. A true hero! ☐

Bellmen with a loyal heart



Nick

PALM BEACH — The arrival experience provides guests with a first impression of the hotel. You never get a second chance at a first impression, so it is important to make the guest's arrival as pleasant as possible. That is, among others, the important task of a bellman. At the Barceló Aruba two jubilee bellmen are saying goodbye to the job they have loved for respectively 42 and 44 years.

Nick Rasmijn is working for Barceló 44 years, Ketty Lisper completed 44 years. Long-term loyal Barceló guests Dede and Ricky Grosser from Rochester, New York would like to shine a spotlight on these two wonderful men that day in, day out did their upmost to please the guests. Their retirement should go with a recognition of their 40 plus loyal years to the Barceló Aruba, is the opinion of the Grossers. Aruba Today couldn't agree more, so congratulations to Rasmijn and Lisper! Enjoy your retirement after all these years of serving our appreciated visitors. ☐



Ketty

Travel Tips

Aeropuerto Internacional
Reina Beatrix
ARUBA AIRPORT AUTHORITY N.V.

1. When checking-in, you will always need your valid passport, along with your ticket, e-ticket receipt or e-ticket confirmation. For some countries a Visa is also required.
2. For all US-bound departures, check-in three hours before your scheduled departure time.
3. For all US-bound flights, after check-in, leave building through the exit on the left side of building; follow the signs and head towards local immigrations, main security screening, shopping area and the departure gates. Aruba Airport provides full US Pre-Clearance service.
4. For all Non US departures, check-in may vary between airlines and destinations; always consult your airline for more information. Being at the airport 3 hours before your departure flight is always safe.
5. For all Non US flights, after check-in, leave building through the exit on the right side of building; follow the signs and head towards Local immigrations, main security screening, shopping area and the departure gates.
6. If traveling with a carry-on, there are restrictions on liquids, gels and aerosols you can carry in your carry-on luggage. Always check with your airline on limitations.
7. Always check the weight limit of your baggage; excess weight may result in penalty fees.
8. Always label your bags and suitcases with your name, address and phone number.
9. Always leave all carry-on items unlocked while passing through screening points to not cause delays if these need to be inspected.
10. Avoid wearing big belt buckles, clothing with metal buttons, lots of jewelry etc. when traveling. If you have these on, remove all metal items and place these in a tray for screening. It is advisable to put all metal items in your carry-on luggage until you clear security. This will help speed up the process.
11. Remove shoes at checkpoint and place in tray for x-ray machine screening.
12. All electronic items should be placed in tray outside their case for x-ray screening.
13. Avoid packing foods and beverages in your check-in baggage. When traveling to the US, you have to comply with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. More information <https://www.usda.gov/>.
14. If traveling with medication, please pack these in your carry-on luggage in their original packaging.
15. If you medical documentation, present this to the security checkpoint screener to inform them. The documentation is not required and will not exempt you from the screening process.
16. Take note of inadmissible items such as sharp objects, sporting goods, guns and firearms, martial arts and self-defense items, tools, explosive materials, flammable items, disabling chemicals and other items when traveling. More information available on www.airportaruba.com.

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Aruba to Me

ORANJESTAD – We would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island. Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory in our newspaper. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today's newspaper we received a great picture from **Maxine and Greg from Ontario Canada**.

They wrote:

Aruba to me is "Our morning routine".

Thank you Maxine and Greg for making Aruba Today part of your morning routine. We truly appreciate it! ☐



Best places in the Caribbean

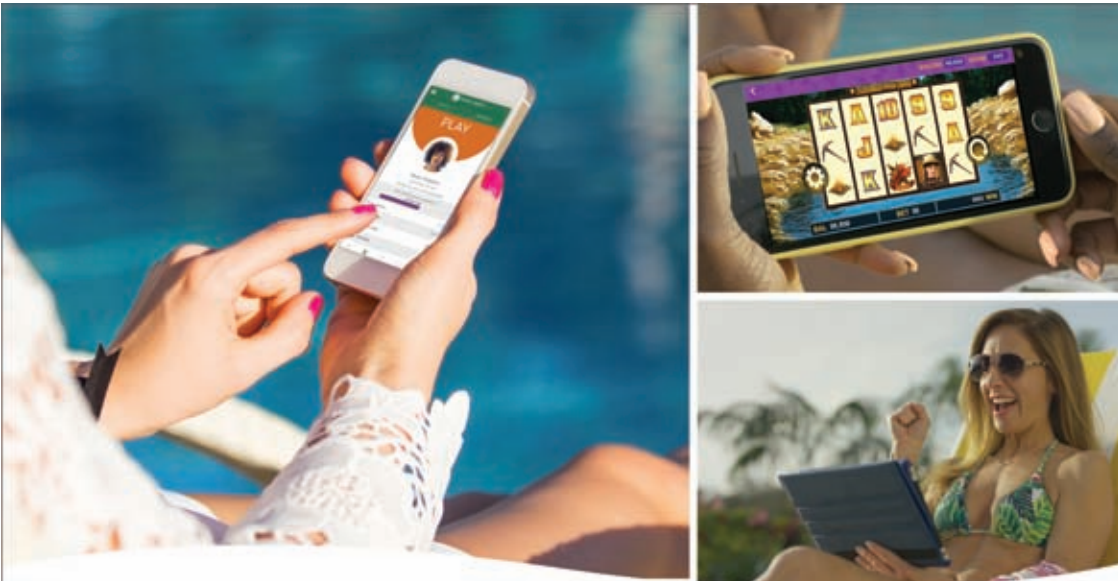
ORANJESTAD — Aruba has been voted as your dream tropical getaway in several categories by USA Today 10 Best. 10Best.com provides users with original, unbiased, and experiential travel content of top attractions, things to see and do, and restaurants for top destinations in the U.S. and around the world.

10Best asked readers to help them name the Caribbean's best resorts, beaches, attractions, bars, distilleries, golf courses and restaurants. For the past four weeks, our readers have been voting daily for their favorites, and the results are in. A panel of experts partnered with 10Best editors to pick the initial nominees, and the top winners were determined by popular vote. □



Best Caribbean Attraction: Arikok National Park in Aruba

Covering 20 percent of the island of Aruba, Arikok National Park features cacti-covered hills and a dramatic coastline. Visitors to the park can climb into ruins of an old gold mine, search for Arawak petroglyphs or go snorkeling in a natural pool.



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Best Caribbean Beach: Eagle Beach in Aruba

Aruba's widest beach is also one of its most spectacular, thanks to its blindingly white sand, warm Caribbean waters and some of the island's most famous (and photographed) fofoti trees.



Best Caribbean Resort: Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba

An adults-only oasis on the island of Aruba, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort sits on the white sands of Eagle Beach, where guests enjoy stellar views of the sea, warm breezes and tropical sunsets away from the more crowded areas of the island. The 104 rooms and suites feature eco-friendly amenities, as well as free breakfast and Wi-Fi.



Best Restaurant in the Caribbean: Elements Restaurant in Aruba

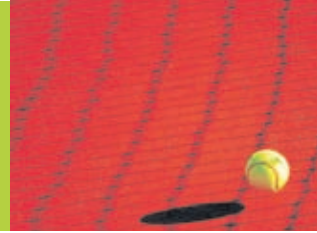
The spectacular oceanfront setting at Elements complements the menu of globally-inspired dishes made from sustainable and locally grown ingredients. Local Aruban classics are served weekly during Sunday evening Local Arts - Local Eats events.



Best Caribbean Golf Course: 5th place Tierra del sol

This 18-hole, Robert Trent Jones, Jr. -designed championship golf course offers a world-class golfing experience. Aruba's amazing natural beauty has been displayed to good effect. Exotic plants and rock formations are interwoven amongst the greens, and there is even a bird sanctuary on site. The par-71 course is 6811 yards long. The highest tee is 98 feet above sea level and boasts a dramatic ocean view.

SPORTS



NFL players' union sends labor proposal to members for vote

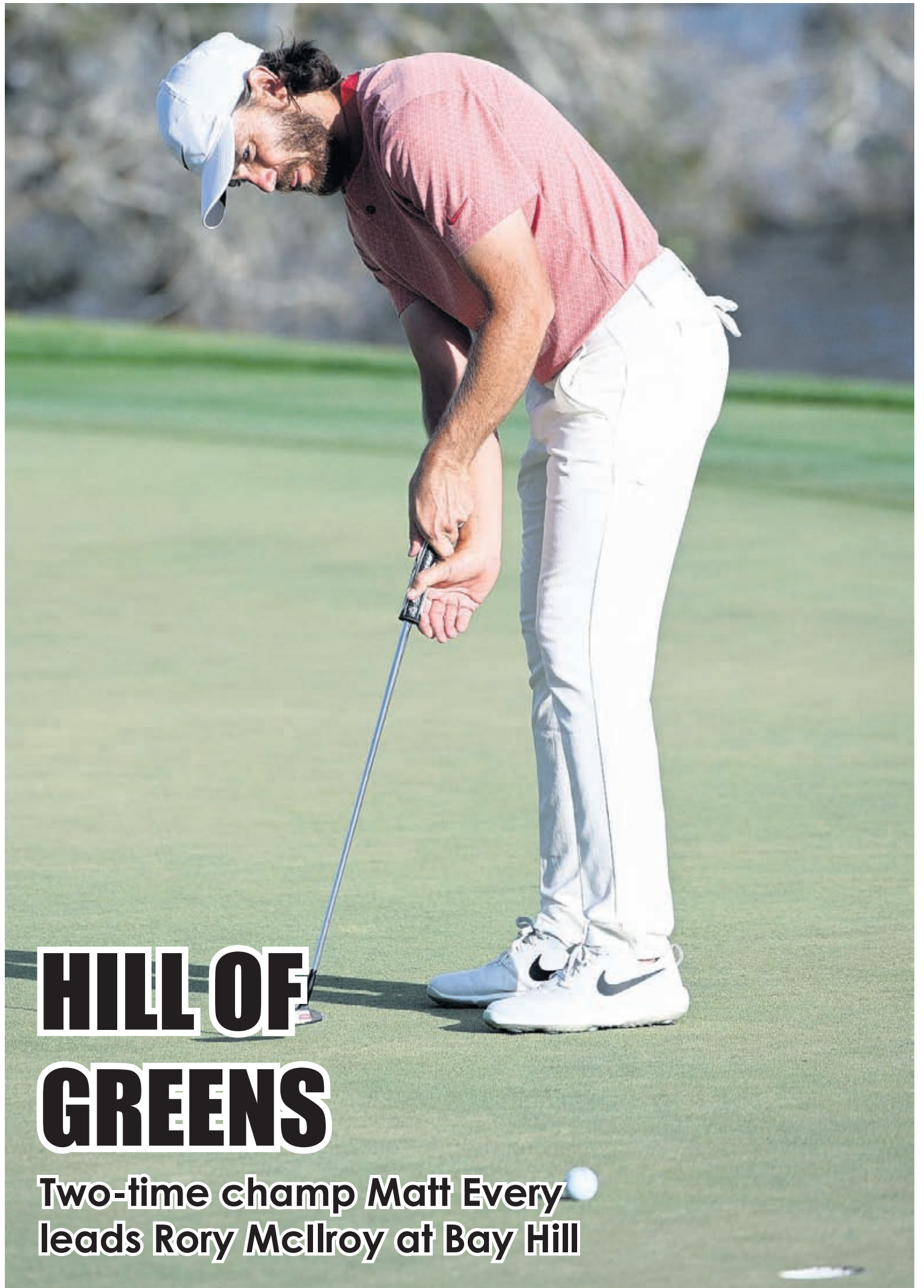
By **DAVE CAMPBELL**
AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL Players Association sent ballots to members Thursday for voting on the proposed collective bargaining agreement, giving the union a week to either ensure another 11 years of labor peace or send the matter back to the drawing board.

The NFLPA announced that votes would be accepted through March 12 at one minute before midnight. The more than 2,000 members will have a window of about 7 1/2 days to examine the 439-page document and cast a yes or no vote. Ratification requires a simple majority. So if only 1,000 ballots were returned, the union would need 501 yes votes to approve.

Every player who was a dues-paying member during the 2019 season received a ballot, the NFLPA said. Votes will be confidential and received by an independent auditor. "We encourage every NFL player to review the full collective bargaining agreement and exercise their democratic right to vote," the union said in a statement.

The distribution took place two weeks after league owners voted their approval of the agreement that's a product of 10 months of talks between both sides.



HILL OF GREENS

Two-time champ Matt Every leads Rory McIlroy at Bay Hill

Tommy Fleetwood, of England, watches his putt on the 18th green during the first round of the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament, Thursday, March 5, 2020, in Orlando, Fla.

Every delivers again at Bay Hill, leads McIlroy by 1 shot

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The leading two players at Bay Hill are no surprise, even if they have next to nothing in common.

Rory McIlroy, the No. 1 player in the world who hasn't finished out of the top 10 in any tournament since September, shot a 6-under 66 on Thursday morning in the Arnold Palmer Invitational. Matt Every, the No. 309 player in the world whose only two PGA Tour victories in 237 starts were back-to-back at Bay Hill, played in the tough afternoon wind and was one shot better with a 65.

Not only was it Every's lowest round at Bay Hill, it was 20 shots better than his last round six days ago in the Honda Classic, when he shot 85.

What a game.

Every, who served a three-month suspension at the end of last year for using cannabis that he said was prescribed legally for mental health treatment, played bogey-free and put on a clinic with his irons, the strength of his game. He poured it on his back nine with birdie putts of 35, 45 and 30 feet.

"I just didn't want to shoot myself out of the tournament with the way the weather was," Every said. "The putter was a little shaky. It's always a little shaky. It was a good day for me."

It wasn't bad for McIlroy.

He avoided a big number early and delivered his best shot late for the best score among the early starters, when the wind only started



Matt Every watches his putt on the ninth green during the first round of the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament, Thursday, March 5, 2020, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

to get strong at the end.

McIlroy had his sixth consecutive opening round of 68 or lower, another great start.

It just didn't feel that way early.

Trying to hammer an 8-iron to a back flag on his second hole of the day at No. 11, the ball landed short and left of the green and rolled into the water. He took a penalty drop, hit a pedestrian chip and escaped with a bogey by making a 10-foot putt.

"To hole that putt for bogey ... making 5 instead of 6 there is a big deal," McIlroy said. "One over through 2 instead of 2 over is sort of a different feeling. And to turn that nine around and turn in 1 under, I felt pretty good about myself going to the front nine."

He made three birdies and an eagle — a 3-iron from a fairway bunker to 25 feet — and was most satisfied by taking advantage of easier scoring conditions.

Scottie Scheffler boosted his bid for a Masters invitation with a bogey-free 67 and joined Talor Gooch two shots behind. Scheffler, the player of the year on the Korn Ferry Tour, is No. 51 in the world and needs to get in the top 50 after the Match Play at the end of the month.

Another Masters hopeful, Christiaan Bezuidenhout, was in the group at 68 along with Keith Mitchell and Graeme McDowell.

Bay Hill was plenty tough even before the wind arrived because of the thick rough framing fairways and greens that became firmer

and faster under a warm Florida sun.

It felt that way for Phil Mickelson in the afternoon and Adam Scott in the morning. Both shot 77. Only 18 players from the 120-man field broke 70.

Every, even with his Bay Hill victories in 2014 and 2015, had a round out of nowhere. His 85 at the Honda Classic last Friday is a little misleading. He was on his way to missing the cut when he was determined to hit the proper shot to a back pin on a par 3 over the water. He hit 5-iron four times into the water. He hit 4-iron onto the green and made 11.

"I wasn't leaving that tee until I hit the shot I wanted," Every said. "And I flushed every one of them, exactly in the same spot in the wa-

ter."

With two balls left, he went with the 4-iron. And he finished the round and signed for his score.

The card he signed Thursday was much better.

McIlroy has gone six consecutive events worldwide without finishing worse than sixth, so this was expected. Even after his bogey on No. 11, and missing a 3-foot birdie putt on the par-5 12th, he was never really bothered.

"One over through six, there's still 66 holes left in this golf tournament," he said.

He began turning it around with a 5-iron into about 25 feet for a two-putt birdie on the 16th, and a flawlessly played 18th hole with a 3-wood off the tee and a 9-iron to 10 feet behind the flag.

"Sort of had a bit of good pep in my step going into the first tee, and then I played some great golf after that," he said.

It was that 3-iron from the bunker on the par-5 fourth that provided the strongest illustration that this is a player in full flight as the Masters — the only major keeping him from a career Grand Slam — is right around the corner.

His caddie, Harry Diamond, told him it was his best shot of the year. It's early March. But it was special.

"I had 260," McIlroy said. "I said to Harry, 'If I can catch this 3-iron good and maybe pitch 10 or 15 yards short, maybe trundle up the hill' ... but short was always better than long. At it just came out perfectly and got up to pin high." □

Piercy loses 2 endorsements over homophobic Instagram posts

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Four-time PGA Tour winner Scott Piercy lost two endorsement deals Thursday for sharing a homophobic meme poking fun at Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg and referencing far-right conspiracy theory QAnon. Piercy this week shared a meme on Instagram on

the news Buttigieg has suspended his campaign that included a reference to his sexuality as a gay man.

He doesn't have a large following on Instagram -- just under 17,000 followers -- but posted an apology Tuesday "if any of my recent story posts have been offensive. I will do better!" That wasn't enough for

Titleist, which confirmed it terminated his contract on Tuesday. Piercy had a full deal with Titleist and FootJoy products.

According to Golf Digest, clothing maker J. Lindeberg issued a statement Thursday that it ended its contract with Piercy.

"When we choose our ambassadors, we choose

individuals we know will represent us well on and off the golf course. The claims from Scott Piercy were unacceptable and far from our views and beliefs," the statement said. "We, J.Lindeberg, as a company do not stand by the statements made by Piercy and we want to make sure our customers,

employees, and other ambassadors know we support all communities and have no room for hate or discrimination in our company."

Piercy told the Morning Read website he understood why Titleist ended the contract and described his posts as "a terrible lack of judgment." □

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Fear of unknown looms in sports as virus spreads

By **TIM DAHLBERG**
AP Sports Columnist

So far, at least, spring training ballparks are drawing good crowds and NBA and NHL arenas are mostly full. There's little sign of coronavirus panic among U.S. sports fans, even if the team store doesn't carry masks with their favorite player's name and number on them.

That may change. And soon.

Two colleges this week canceled trips to the Seattle area for basketball games after an outbreak of the new coronavirus in Washington state, the first major U.S. sports disruptions because of the virus. Chicago State officials said in a statement that the decision not to make the trip to an area under a state of emergency was done with the "health and well-being of the campus community in mind."

It might be undue caution, but the schools decided the risk of contracting the virus was greater than reward of possibly winning a game. That means there will be no senior day this year at Seattle University, where players were supposed to be honored before Saturday's game against Missouri-Kansas City.

These are dangerous and unpredictable times. There's a virus spreading that can kill, and it seems no large gathering is completely safe.

In Denmark on Thursday, a former professional soccer player who represented the country at the 2010 World

Cup tested positive for the virus. Thirteen people who attended a soccer game in Amsterdam along with Thomas Kahlenberg were put in home quarantine, while three players from the Lyngby club who had been in contact with Kahlenberg were also quarantined.

And in Las Vegas, where five conference basketball tournaments will be played over the next week, officials on Thursday announced the first presumptive case of the virus.

Nobody knows just how much the coronavirus will spread. Nobody knows how much it will disrupt American sports or American society.

Recent events in affected areas around the world, though, suggest it won't be good. An ominous pattern is developing that threatens sports — at least temporarily — as we know them now.

In Italy, all sports events will take place without fans for at least the next month as officials scramble to contain the virus from spreading. Sports competitions and pre-Olympic events have been canceled in Japan, even as organizers vow the Summer Olympics will go on as planned in July.

In England, pre-game handshakes between Premier League players have been banned, and there are suggestions some future matches may end up being played without fans. Even players in the Italy-South Korea Davis Cup qualifier this weekend will



Spectators watch from the forest during the women's Biathlon World Cup 7.5 km sprint event in Nove Mesto na Morave, Czech Republic, Thursday, March 5, 2020. Due to the Corona virus the Biathlon World Cup will take place without spectators.

Associated Press

have to adjust. They will handle their own towels, so the ball kids don't have to touch their sweat.

Suddenly, the hypothetical doesn't seem so hypothetical anymore. Sports draw crowds, and crowds are the enemy of efforts to contain the virus.

Could we see empty stadiums as the major league season begins? It seems implausible at first blush, but the Seattle Mariners open at home in three weeks and right now all bets are off.

How about March Madness, where thousands gather in arenas across the country? Does anyone trust the NCAA with coming up with a plan to protect both athletes and fans as play begins in less than two weeks and so little is still known about where the vi-

rus has spread?

Let's go a little further down the road on a crowded spring sports schedule. Can you imagine a Kentucky Derby run without spectators? A Masters played with just players on the course? Again, no one really knows. Already, though, those with underlying medical conditions are being advised to stay away from crowds, and people 65 and older are at tremendous risk, too. And, really, how much fun will it be to be at a basketball game while listening with increasing dread to sniffles from fans in the row behind? An unexpected sneeze could empty a row, or even a section.

Players themselves are also at risk. Already NBA players are avoiding high-fives and autograph seekers, acting on league guidance, and

MLB is telling players not to accept balls and pens from fans when signing autographs.

And how about the possibility of players catching the virus from teammates? In Florida on Thursday, Cubs pitcher Yu Darvish was scratched from a scheduled start because of illness and tweeted that he was worried about being in the clubhouse because he had a cough.

Meanwhile, in Switzerland IOC President Thomas Bach insisted the Olympics will begin as scheduled in Tokyo in July. The words "postponement" and "cancellation" weren't even brought up in two days of IOC meetings, Bach said.

Bach, of course, is protecting both the golden goose and the Olympic brand. But the bottom line is he can't forecast how this will all end up any more than baseball commissioner Rob Manfred can.

A number of Olympic qualifiers have already been postponed and are in limbo. And while next week's lighting of the Olympic torch in Greece is still on, it's hard to imagine a torch relay following as planned across Japan beginning March 26 if the virus is still spreading there.

Right now, the biggest inconvenience for U.S. sports fans is having to carry hand sanitizer and wait in longer lines at the washroom sinks. But events are proving to be as fast moving as the virus. That could change and change quick.

Nobody really knows. □

Doncic breaks Mavs' career triple-double record with 22nd

By The Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Luka Doncic scored 30 points and broke Dallas' career triple-double record with his 22nd, helping the Mavericks hold off the New Orleans Pelicans 127-123 in overtime Wednesday night.

Doncic added 17 rebounds and 10 assists, and Kristaps Porzingis had 34 points and 12 rebounds in the nationally televised matchup between young stars Doncic and Zion Williamson. Williamson scored 21 points in 35 minutes in the first back-to-back of his NBA career. Doncic broke Jason Kidd's record for triple-doubles just five days after his 21st birthday.

Neither team led by more than three points throughout the fourth quarter or overtime until Doncic fed Porzingis for a dunk with 49 seconds left to give Dallas a four-point lead. Doncic had hit a 3 to snap a 118-118 tie with 1:10 to play.

Williamson held up well in his first back-to-back since making his NBA debut Jan. 22. He has scored double figures in all 16 games he's played in and has 20 points or more in his last 13.

Brandon Ingram led New Orleans with 27 points, but fouled out in overtime. Lonzo Ball added 25.

The Pelicans' Nicolo Melli sent the game to overtime with a tying 3 with 7.4 seconds left after missing his first six 3s of the game.

BUCKS 119, PACERS 100

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Gi-



New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson (1) and Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic (77) watch play during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas, Wednesday, March 4, 2020. Associated Press

annis Antetokounmpo had 29 points, 12 rebounds and six assists and Milwaukee recovered after squandering an early 22-point lead to rout Indiana.

The Bucks bounced back from a 105-89 loss at Miami in which they posted their lowest point total of the season. An NBA-best 53-9, Milwaukee hasn't lost back-to-back games all season. Indiana had a four-game winning streak snapped as it fell into a tie with Philadelphia for fifth place in the Eastern Conference standings. The Pacers also lost guard Malcolm Brogdon to a sore left hip in the second quarter.

The Pacers were without Victor Oladipo for the second straight game be-

cause of a sore right knee. Milwaukee was missing reserve guards George Hill (groin contusion) and Kyle Korver (back soreness).

Khris Middleton had 20 points for Milwaukee, and Donte DiVincenzo matched a career high with 19.

T.J. Warren scored 18 points for Indiana, and Doug McDermott had 16.

HEAT 116, MAGIC 113

MIAMI (AP) — Duncan Robinson scored 27 points, all of them coming from beyond the arc, and Miami hit a franchise-record 22 3-pointers to beat Orlando. Goran Dragic scored 25 points and added nine assists, Kelly Olynyk scored 16 on a perfect shooting night and Jimmy Butler finished

with 12 points, eight assists and seven rebounds. Miami won four straight. The previous record for Heat 3-pointers was 21, set April 5, 2017, at Charlotte. The 22 3-pointers made also tied the most allowed in a game by Orlando. Terrence Ross scored 35 and hit a season-high eight 3-pointers for the Magic.

CELTICS 112, CAVALIERS 106

CLEVELAND (AP) — Jayson Tatum scored 32 points and Boston beat Cleveland in a matchup of short-handed teams.

The Celtics were missing starters Kemba Walker, Jaylen Brown and Gordon Hayward, and the Cavaliers played without starters Andre Drummond and rookie Darius Garland. Cavaliers rookie swingman Kevin Porter Jr. left the game in the first half with a head injury and didn't return.

Cleveland rookie Collin Sexton scored a career-high 41 points, making 17 of 29 shots from the field. His previous career high was 32 against Utah.

JAZZ 112, KNICKS 104

NEW YORK (AP) — Donovan Mitchell and Bojan Bogdanovic each scored 23 points and Utah beat New York.

Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 14 rebounds for the Jazz. They won their third straight against a team well below .500 from the Eastern Conference.

Julius Randle had 32 points and 11 rebounds for New York.

Spike Lee was not in his seats, a day after vowing to attend no more Knicks home games this season after arguing with security guards who told him Monday he had to use a different entrance to reach his courtside spot.

THUNDER 114, PISTONS 107

DETROIT (AP) — Danilo Gallinari made a 3-pointer in the final minute and Oklahoma City beat Detroit after blowing a 16-point second-half lead.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points for Oklahoma City. The Thunder had lost their previous two games, not scoring more than 94 points in either.

Christian Wood scored a career-high 29 points for Detroit.

GRIZZLIES 118, NETS 79

NEW YORK (AP) — Josh Jackson scored 19 points and Memphis ran away from Brooklyn.

Tyus Jones added 18 points to help Memphis win its third in a row. Ja Morant scored 15 points.

Taurean Prince had 15 points for Brooklyn.

TIMBERWOLVES 115, BULLS 108

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Malik Beasley scored 24 points, D'Angelo Russell added 19 and Minnesota beat Chicago to win both games of a back-to-back for the first time this season.

Coby White led Chicago with 26 points.

TRAIL BLAZERS 125, WIZARDS 104

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Damian Lillard had 22 points in his return from a groin injury and Carmelo Anthony scored 25 as Portland beat Washington.

Hassan Whiteside finished with 24 points, 16 rebounds and four blocks for Portland. CJ McCollum, like Lillard, had 22 points and five assists. It was Lillard's first game in three weeks after missing six with a groin strain. Wizards guard Bradley Beal, who began the day as the NBA's second-leading scorer, had 29 points on 10-for-29 shooting (35%) from the field. □



An ad for the American Gaming Association is seen tested on a screen after an NHL hockey game between the Washington Capitals and the Philadelphia Flyers, Wednesday, March 4, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

Gambling industry urges sports bettors to wager responsibly

By WAYNE PARRY

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)

— The gambling industry is launching a campaign to urge sports bettors to wager responsibly, including setting and sticking to a budget, and learning thoroughly about anything on which they make a bet.

The American Gaming Association on Thursday launched its "Have A Game Plan" campaign in hockey arenas in Washington and Las Vegas.

The campaign will soon expand to other states where sports betting is legal. Fourteen states currently offer sports betting, and many others are considering it.

The gaming association says Americans have bet more than \$19 billion on sports with licensed sports books since the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way for it in May 2018, ruling in a case brought by New Jersey.

But the campaign is an acknowledgment that sports betting can be problematic — or worse — for some people.

Neva Pryor, executive director of the Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, said calls to her state's 1-800-GAMBLER help line are up more than 27% over last year. Of that

amount, more than 14% of callers said they have a problem controlling their betting on sports, she said.

"This is a watershed moment for sports betting in the United States," said Bill Miller, president and CEO of gambling industry's trade group. "Roughly 100 million Americans will be able to legally wager on sports in their state by the end of this year. It's more important than ever that the gaming industry, and our new partners in the sports betting ecosystem, are proactive in equipping patrons with the tools they need to engage in these offerings in a responsible manner."

The initial campaign includes advertising on the boards near the ice at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, where they are likely to be included in broadcasts and still photos of the game, and illuminated signs inside pedestrian corridors at Washington's Capital One Arena.

"When it comes to legal sports betting, nothing can be more important than responsibility," said Jim Van Stone, president of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, which owns the Washington Capitals and the arena in which they play. □



Philadelphia Flyers goaltender Brian Elliott deflects the puck during the third period of the team's NHL hockey game against the Washington Capitals, Wednesday, March 4, 2020, in Washington. The Flyers won 5-2.

Associated Press

Flyers beat Capitals 5-2, extend winning streak to 7 games

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)

— Travis Konecny scored just over a minute after a questionable video review wiped out a goal, and the Philadelphia Flyers beat the Washington Capitals 5-2 on Wednesday night to extend their winning streak to seven games.

Just 71 seconds after referee Peter MacDougall said there was "no conclusive evidence" to show the puck crossed the goal line underneath goaltender Braden Holtby, Konecny hammered the puck into the back of the net for his 24th of the season. He celebrated as if he scored twice.

The Flyers scored three times in 10 minutes to flip momentum in a showdown of the top teams in the Metropolitan Division. Additional goals by Kevin Hayes and Tyler Pitlick during that run, one each by Ivan Provorov and Scott Laughton in the third and 25 saves from Brian Elliott helped Philadelphia move within one point of first-place Washington.

Lars Eller opened the scoring for Washington, and Tom Wilson set up Garnet Hathaway for its second goal of the game.

Philadelphia might be without James van Riemsdyk for

some time after the winger broke his right hand after taking a puck to the right hand in the first. Coach Alain Vigneault said van Riemsdyk had an X-ray and "it doesn't look real good."

DUCKS 4, AVALANCHE 3, OT

DENVER (AP) — Rickard Rakell scored with 1.2 seconds remaining in overtime, Ryan Miller stopped 32 shots and Anaheim ended Colorado's seven-game winning streak.

Rakell's shot appeared to deflect off the stick of Avalanche defenseman Samuel Girard and past goaltender Pavel Francouz. It was Rakell's first goal since Jan. 31.

Sam Steel, Andrew Agozzino and Brendan Guhle also added goals to accomplish a rare feat these days — finding space between the pads of Francouz, who's been one of the top goaltenders in the league. Vladislav Namestnikov, Gabriel Landeskog and Nathan MacKinnon scored for Colorado, which picked up a point to pull to within two points of St. Louis for the top seed in the Western Conference. Landeskog also added two assists.

FLAMES 3, BLUE JACKETS 2, OT

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — T.J. Brodie scored with

11 seconds remaining in overtime as Calgary rallied from a two-goal deficit and beat Columbus.

Blue Jackets goaltender Joonas Korpisalo had lost his stick and was unable to get a glove on Brodie's wrist shot from the high slot. Elias Lindholm and Matthew Tkachuk also scored for Calgary. Cam Talbot made 20 saves and improved to 8-3-1 since Jan. 1.

Devin Shore and Gustav Nyquist scored first-period goals for Columbus. Korpisalo stopped 34 shots.

COYOTES 4, CANUCKS 2

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Lawson Crouse scored a tiebreaking goal midway through the third period and the Arizona Coyotes tightened the playoff race in the Western Conference with a win over Vancouver.

The teams combined for five goals and two lead changes in a wild third period.

Crouse and Nick Schmaltz scored goals 2:29 apart for Arizona. Carl Soderberg had a goal and an assist for the Coyotes, who have won two in a row and three out of four.

Oliver Ekman-Larsson added an empty-net goal and an assist. □

MLB reminding teams about sticky substance rules

By JAY COHEN

AP Sports Writer

MESA, Ariz. (AP) —

Gaylord Perry threw a spitball. Joe Niekro had an emery board and a piece of sandpaper. Whitey Ford used his wedding ring.

Pitchers have been tinkering with the ball for years in search of an advantage, skirting and — occasionally — breaking major league rules in the process. But they might have to work a little harder on their deception this season.

In response to inquiries from clubs on the topic, Major League Baseball recently issued a reminder to teams about what is allowed and what violates sections 3.01 and 6.02 of the Official Playing Rules. The commissioner's office went over possible discipline for violations and the duties of the umpires in those situations. It also has been following up with teams on the topic during spring training.

Rule 3.01 says no player shall intentionally discolor or damage the ball by rubbing it with soil, rosin, paraffin, licorice, sand paper, emery paper or other for-



In this Sept. 3, 1973, file photo, home plate umpire John Flaherty checks Cleveland Indians pitcher Gaylord Perry's cap for an illegal substance, at the request of Milwaukee Brewers manager Del Crandall, during the first baseball game of a doubleheader in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

foreign substance. Rule 6.02 prohibits the application of a foreign substance to the ball or even possessing a foreign substance on the mound. It also says defacing the ball "in any manner" is against the rules.

The running conversation on the pair of rules has captured the attention of players and coaches alike this spring training.

"I have heard and I mean a lot of the coaches have

come up and said 'Hey, like we can't even carry anything, I mean non-substance related, we're going to get in trouble for it, we get fired,'" White Sox pitcher Dallas Keuchel said. "I mean I know the rule now, but I mean I don't know exactly the use of it. Who uses it? Who doesn't use it?"

Keuchel said White Sox manager Rick Renteria covered the situation in a team meeting.

"It's been going on for decades, since I've known baseball, but, hey, if they want to enforce it, then they're going to enforce it," Keuchel said.

"That's just the way it's going to be."

No one knows exactly how many pitchers use a foreign substance to gain an advantage, or what might result of any increased diligence in the area.

Cincinnati Reds pitcher Trevor Bauer told HBO's "Real Sports" for a segment shown last month that he believes 70% of major league pitchers use an unallowed sticky substance on the ball. Bauer also suggested in 2018 that pitchers with the Houston Astros were manipulating balls to increase spin rates.

"All that I've heard and understand is that they're just going to crack down a little bit more on foreign substance," Chicago Cubs pitching coach Tommy Hottovy said Thursday.

"To the extent of what that is and what guys can (or) can't use, I mean there's rosin on the field. Guys put sunscreen on during day

games. So it's going to be hard to say OK we can do this and not that, or what they're actually cracking down on yet."

Speaking in Florida, players' association head Tony Clark said the union has discussed the foreign substance rule and its enforcement with MLB.

"We'll have to see how that manifests itself moving forward," Clark said.

If MLB enforces a more strict interpretation of the two rules, a safety issue could develop if more batters are hit by pitches in tough weather conditions.

Hottovy said he thinks time will tell about how it is going to go.

"I think we'll get a better sense of it once we start talking to umpires of what they're going to be looking for and what are going to trigger some of those things they're going to ask," he said, "and again, just understanding whether or not it's going to be means for ejection or they're just going to say 'Hey, you're using something, change the glove' or whatever that might be." □

MLB wants to ban in-game video, union would allow

By MARK DITLER

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) —

Major League Baseball has proposed banning player access to video during games, according to New York Yankees pitcher Zack Britton, but the union wants to allow it with protections that would prevent catchers' signs from being visible. Players' association head Tony Clark met with the Yankees for three hours Wednesday and discussed negotiations for new video rules in the wake of the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal.

"Right now, MLB's proposal would be like a blackout. There would be no access," Britton said. "That's a pretty extreme stance because of one team, that everyone else is punished. So, hopefully, we can find some common ground, but

definitely before opening day. Guys would like to understand what we're going to be allowed to use and what we're not going to be allowed to use before opening day."

Houston violated rules by using a camera in the outfield to steal catchers' signs during its run to the 2017 World Series title and again in 2018. The team was fined \$5 million, manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended for one season and the team was stripped of draft picks. Hinch and Luhnow were fired by the team, but no players were disciplined.

MLB also is investigating whether Boston broke rules. Under the union's proposal, hitters would still be allowed to review video of their at-bats during games and pitchers would be al-



New York Yankees' Zack Britton delivers a pitch during the sixth inning of a spring training baseball game against the Detroit Tigers Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020, in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

lowed to look over their mound performance.

"The view that the players have is one that is concerned about where the game is and where it's going. So everything that we've slid across the table in regards to proposals on technology has been a re-

flection of that," Clark said. "And that we've slid across includes access to technology, certain technology during the course of the game. There's systems that allow for access to your at-bats, and or your time on the mound. Having access to those videos even with

certain criteria in place to protect the integrity of those videos is what has been in the proposals."

Clark said there are a number of ways to implement it, including in-house monitoring. The clips would not show catcher's signs.

"The video person would be entrusted with cutting those clips, and you would look to have a standard of oversight thereafter," Clark said. "The conversions we've had included that, as well as the individual clips sent to a central place that allows for review, as well."

Clark said the union is open to setting rules for player discipline for future technology rules violations. Players will not be punished for violations in the Boston and Houston investigations, baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred has said. □

Together at last: Timbers reunite the Chara brothers

By ANNE M. PETERSON

AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — If they didn't play different positions, it would be difficult to tell the Chara brothers apart on the field.

Diego and his younger brother Yimmi have been reunited this season by the Portland Timbers. The two got their first opportunity to play together in more than a decade over the weekend when they both started in the team's season opener.

Midfielder Diego Chara, 33, has been with the Timbers nearly from the start. He signed as the team's first designated player in April 2011, the year Portland joined Major League Soccer as an expansion team. Yimmi Chara, a 28-year-old winger, signed with the team this January.

"It was a dream. We had the opportunity to play 10 years ago on the same team in Colombia. Now

to have the opportunity to play again, it's amazing," Diego Chara said. "I think Yimmi's a great addition for the team."

The duo aren't the only brothers on an MLS roster this season. The Chicago Fire has Nicholas and Gabriel Slonina, a pair of promising young homegrown players, but they have yet to play together.

In all, 15 sets of siblings have appeared together on the same team in league history.

The first were Sean and Chris Henderson, who played with the Colorado Rapids from 1996-98. The most recent were Cristian and Alex Roldan, who spent the last two seasons with the Seattle Sounders.

Among the others were Chris Wondolowski, the league's all-time leading scorer, who played with his brother Stephen on the 2008 Houston Dynamo, while Alexi and Greg Lalas

played together very briefly for the New England Revolution in 1997.

Timbers general manager Gavin Wilkinson discovered the Charas on a scouting trip some 10 years ago. The brothers, who hail from Cali, Colombia, come from a football family: dad Jesus and older brother Felipe, 39, also played professionally.

Wilkinson said the team has been interested in the younger Chara from the start, joking that waiting until now probably cost team owner Merritt Paulson a "hell of a lot more money." But ultimately the timing wasn't right for a variety of reasons, he said.

"I think what (Yimmi) brings us now is another experienced professional who has been very, very successful both on the international stage and for top clubs throughout the world," Wilkinson said. "He's well-traveled, and he knows



In this Jan. 22, 2020 photo, Diego Chara, left, and his younger brother Yimmi Chara, right, speak at the Portland Timbers' MLS soccer media day at Providence Park in Portland, Ore.

Associated Press

what his brother has in this club and in this city, and he wants to replicate it, and create his own identity as well."

A feisty midfielder, Diego Chara has become a pest for opponents and a favorite for Portland's ardent supporters. He's the first player across all eras of the

Timbers to play more than eight seasons with the club. He leads the team's all-time list in games played with 263, and games started with 260. He also ranks second in MLS with 638 career fouls and third in yellow cards with 80.

"Having another Chara is amazing. □

Continued from page 17

The NFLPA's 11-member executive committee initially voted 6-5 against the proposed terms, but last week in Indianapolis during the NFL scouting combine the 32 team representatives voted 17-14 in favor — with one abstention — of sending the CBA to the full membership for approval. The new rules, if accepted, would be in effect through the 2030 league year.

With the owners unwavering in their favor of a 17-game regular season, which would begin as soon as 2021 and no later than 2023, players focused more on safeguards for the additional wear and tear and an increased share of the revenue that would grow with the extra game. Plenty of high-profile players have adamantly spoken out against the proposal, including Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers, Seattle quarterback Russell Wilson, Houston defensive end J.J. Watt, Pittsburgh center Maurkice Pouncey and Minnesota wide receiver Stefon Diggs. Their primary contention

with the terms is that they don't go far enough to reward and protect the players for the extra game. Pouncey went so far as to announce recently on social media he was arranging a contingency fund with fellow critics Mike Pouncey and Russell Okung that would assist young players in the event of a strike.

There's no telling how the full vote will turn out, though, with lesser-known and fringe players outnumbering stars. This CBA would give a bigger boost to the rank-and-file players than usual, with a roughly 20% hike to the minimum salary right away, to \$610,000. That figure would top \$1 million by 2029.

NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith said last week he believed the proposal would pass. NFL owners initiated a lockout in 2011 that lasted more than four months, but the two sides came together to reach the current agreement right before training camps were to begin. The last time games were lost to a labor dispute was dur-



Pittsburgh Steelers owner Arthur Rooney II leaves after NFL owners meet to discuss a proposed labor agreement, Thursday Feb. 20, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

ing the player strike in 1987. NFLPA vice president Sam Acho has been one of the most active supporters. He made the media rounds Thursday, telling SiriusXM radio that he has heard from some players who "are OK playing 17 games for the pay increase."

The owners need labor peace to maximize their leverage in the next round of billion-dollar television contracts, but Acho cautioned against players assuming that reopening ne-

gotiations would necessarily lead to a better deal for the union.

"Then you have to consider the potential of there being a smaller pie that you're getting a percentage of," Acho said. "That's where my mind's at."

Among the notable changes in the proposed new CBA:

— The player share of league revenue, currently at 47%, would rise to at least 48% starting in 2021.
— Padded practices in

training camp would be reduced from a total of 28 to 16, with a five-day acclimation period preceding summer practices. There would be more mandatory days off during camp and a limit on joint practices with other clubs.

— The 17th regular season game would trigger an elimination of the fourth preseason game.

— Active rosters would be able to be expanded from 53 to 55 players, with the option of calling up to two players from the practice squad per week. Game-day active lists would increase from 46 to 48 players, provided at least eight offensive linemen are included. Practice squads would go from 10 to 12 players immediately, with a jump to 14 players in 2022.

— Players would see their paychecks spread over a 36-week period each year once the 17-game schedule — which is 18 weeks including byes — is implemented. Currently, they're paid in 17-week installments for the 16-game schedule. □

Report: Russian social accounts sow election discord - again

By **AMANDA SEITZ** and **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
Associated Press

Four years after Russia-linked groups stoked divisions in the U.S. presidential election on social media platforms, a new report shows that Moscow's campaign hasn't let up and has become harder to detect. The report from University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Young Mie Kim found that Russia-linked social media accounts are posting about the same divisive issues — race relations, gun laws and immigration — as they did in 2016, when the Kremlin polluted American voters' feeds with messages about the presidential election. Facebook has since removed the accounts.

Since then, however, the Russians have grown better at imitating U.S. campaigns and political fan pages online, said Kim, who analyzed thousands of posts. She studied more than 5 million Facebook ads during the 2016 election, identifying Russia's fingerprints on some of the messages through an ad-tracking app. Her review is co-published by the Brennan Center for Justice, a law and policy institute, where she is a scholar.

The Russian improvements make it harder for voters and social media platforms to identify the foreign interference, Kim said.

"For normal users, it is too subtle to discern the differences," Kim said. "By mimicking domestic actors, with similar logos (and) similar names, they are trying to avoid verification."

Kim's report comes weeks after U.S. intelligence officials briefed lawmakers on Russian efforts to stir chaos in American politics and undermine public confidence



This March 4, 2020, image shows a collection of Instagram posts, which Facebook, the owner of Instagram, yanked off the site in October after concluding that they originated from Russia and had links to the Internet Research Agency, a Russian operation that targeted U.S. audiences in 2016.

Associated Press

in this year's election. The classified briefing detailed Russian efforts to boost the White House bids of both Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Last month, FBI Director Christopher Wray warned that Russia was still waging "information warfare" with an army of fictional social media personas and bots that spread disinformation. In a rare, joint statement Monday, the leaders of America's intelligence agencies cautioned that foreign actors were spreading false information ahead of Super Tuesday to "cause confusion and create doubt in our system."

But intelligence officials have not released any details about the type of disinformation or explained how Americans should protect themselves from it.

Russia has repeatedly denied interfering in the U.S. elections, and did again on Thursday.

"You just want us to repeat again that we have nothing to do with the U.S. elections," Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Russia has refined its techniques since 2016 and new foreign actors have joined the game, making it harder to identify Kremlin-backed disinformation said Thomas Rid, a national security expert who has written a book about the Kremlin's history of spreading disinformation.

"I do pick up some chatter that the visibility into Russian operations is not as good as it may appear," Rid said. "It's very difficult to spot Russian interference today."

Still, it's unclear how much impact — if any — Russian disinformation tactics have had on voters. Some of Russia's social media ads in the 2016 U.S. presidential election were seen by only a handful of people and their impact has been "vastly overstated," Rid said.

But Kim's report pulls back the curtain on some of

the online techniques Russia has already used in this year's presidential race, including targeting battleground states with its divisive messaging.

Her review identified thousands of posts last year from more than 30 Instagram accounts, which Facebook removed from the site in October after concluding that they originated from Russia and had links to the Internet Research Agency, a Russian operation that targeted U.S. audiences in 2016. Facebook owns Instagram. Analysis from Graphika, a disinformation security firm, also concluded at the time that the accounts went to "great lengths to hide their origins."

"We will keep evolving our defenses and announcing these influence campaigns, as we did more than 50 times last year," Facebook said in an email. After getting caught off-guard with Russia's 2016 election interference attempts, Facebook, Google, Twitter and others put safeguards in place to prevent it from happening again. This includes taking down posts, groups and accounts that engage in

"coordinated inauthentic behavior," and strengthening verification procedures for political ads.

Kim's analysis found the accounts appeared to mimic existing political ones, including one called "Bernie.2020_" that used campaign logos to make it seem like it was connected to Sanders' campaign or was a fan page for his supporters, Kim said.

Some presidential candidates also were targeted directly.

An account called Stop. Trump2020 posted anti-Trump content. Other Instagram accounts pushed negative messages about Democrat Joe Biden.

"Like for Trump 2020," said one meme featuring a portrait photo of Trump and a photo of Biden. "Ignore for Biden 2020."

It was posted by an Instagram account called Iowa. Patriot, one of several accounts that targeted specific communities in crucial swing states like Michigan, Ohio and Iowa with messaging.

The accounts also appeared to capitalize on other divisive American issues that emerged after the 2016 election.

Some Instagram accounts pretended to be liberal, feminist groups as fallout from the #MeToo movement, which has exposed sexual misconduct allegations against high-profile public figures. Others targeted conservative women with posts that criticized abortions.

"I don't need feminism, because real feminism is about equal opportunity and respect for women. NOT about abortions, free birth control" a meme on one account read.

The accounts varied in how often they posted, the size of their following and the traction the posts received. But they carried the hallmarks of a Russian-backed online disinformation campaign, Kim said.

"They're clearly adapting to current affairs," Kim said. "Targeting both sides with messages is very unique to Russia." □



Spreading virus could deal big blow to malls

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The growing fear over a new virus has transformed busy streets and shopping centers into ghost towns in parts of China, Japan and Italy. Now, with the virus spreading in the U.S., it could deal a major blow to the country's over 1,000 malls at time when many are already struggling with a slew of retail bankruptcies. New diagnoses of the disease in several U.S. states have raised the tally of cases to more than 100. Nine people have died, all in Washington state.

Big malls like American Dream and Mall of America and mall owner Taubman Centers Inc. say they're adding hand sanitizer stations, and they've also stepped up disinfecting high-touch areas like doors and handrails. The International Council of Shopping Centers said its members are following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention.

Shopping centers may have to take more extreme precautions, such as temporary closures, said Coye Nokes, a partner at OC&C Strategy Consultants' consumer and retail practice. "While the brands and retailers can attempt to mitigate the impact via other channels like e-commerce, malls themselves will struggle with traffic under any extended virus scenario," she said.

The first casualty was North Star Mall in San Antonio, Texas, which closed for 24 hours this week after local health officials notified it that a patient who tested positive for the new virus visited over the weekend. A spokeswoman at the mall's owner, Brookfield Properties, said in an email to The Associated Press that the mall has been cleaned several times using products recommended by the CDC and there is a "low risk to the public."

Target, Walmart and other discounters and pharmacy

chains have reported big crowds of customers stocking up on basics like hand sanitizers and canned goods. But shoppers could yet get scared and stay home. A new survey by Coresight Research, a global research firm, hints at troubles ahead for shopping malls as the virus spreads. Almost 28% of nearly 2,000 U.S. internet users aged 18 and older surveyed in late February by Coresight Research said they were cutting back on visits to malls, workplaces and entertainment venues or changing their travel arrangements. Nearly 60% said they're likely to take similar actions if the virus outbreak worsens. Among those who have already changed habits, more than four in 10 say they're limiting visits to shopping centers and malls or avoiding them entirely, and more than three in 10 avoid shops in general. A worsening of the outbreak would hit malls disproportionately, the research suggests. Among those likely



In this Friday, Feb. 28, 2020 file photo, a woman wearing a face mask and gloves rides an escalator at a mostly empty shopping mall in Beijing.

Associated Press

to change habits if the outbreak worsens, around three-quarters expect to avoid shopping complexes, making this the most-avoided type of location. The rising fear comes at a time when malls are dealing with a wide gap between top quality malls and low-end malls. While vacancies at top malls have remained exceptionally tight, at 2.2%, the bottom rung of malls are struggling with an average vacancy

rate of 7.5%, according to Kevin Cody, senior consultant at retail research firm CoStar Group.

The new virus' impact on overall spending is unknown. But if it persists beyond April it could be significant. Craig Johnson, president of consumer consultancy Customer Growth Partners, says in that scenario he'd cut his annual retail sales growth forecast by nearly half to 2.2% from 4.1%. □

Exxon to cut activity in Permian Basin as oil prices plummet

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Exxon Mobil said Thursday it plans to reduce the number of oil rigs operating in an oil-rich region in the Southwest and may cut planned capital expenditures as the spreading coronavirus saps

energy demand.

The price of a barrel of oil has fallen more than 25% since the start of the year, and 8% in the last month, with energy demand expected to shrink as the outbreak drags on the global economy.

Oil prices were already un-

der pressure due to signs of a slowing economy in the U.S. and abroad. Energy demand dropped dramatically as flights to and from China were halted and factories slowed production.

Exxon will reduce the number of rigs in the Permian basin, a region that stretches across the border of New Mexico and Texas.

"We all know today, oversupply, driven by industry investments in some of these growth markets, have exceeded demand,

and we've got a very challenging short-term margin environment which is now being compounded by the growing economic impact of the coronavirus that we're seeing around the world," CEO Darren Woods said Thursday at the New York Stock Exchange. "And that is creating a lot of uncertainty, particularly in the near term, and I would say particularly here in Wall Street. However, the longer term horizon is clear, and today our focus is on that horizon, and the future."

Exxon expects \$30 billion to \$35 billion in capital expenditures this year, but it will likely be toward the bottom half of that range. The company had previously expected to be in the top half of that range, Woods said. □

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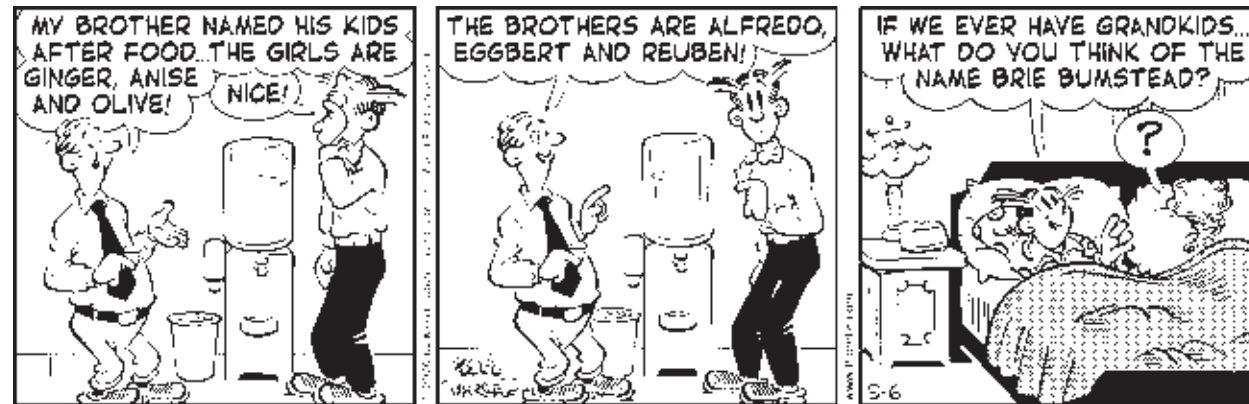
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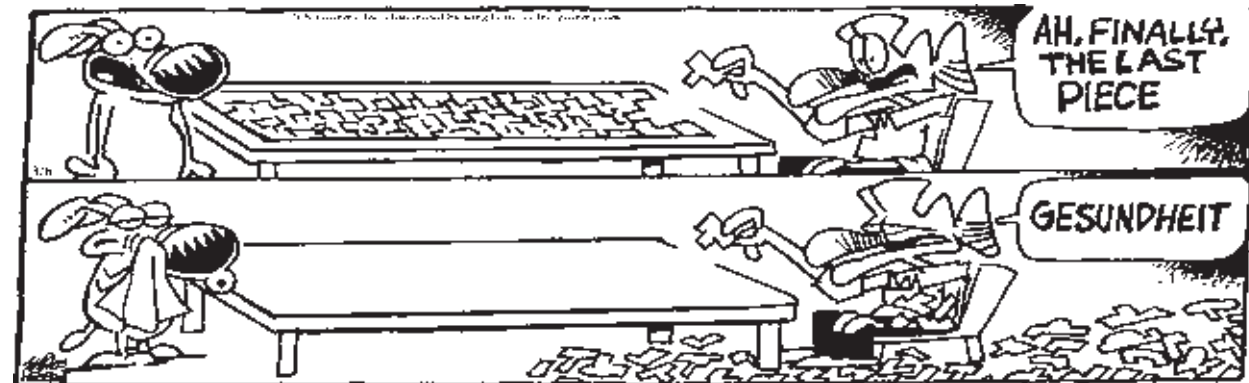
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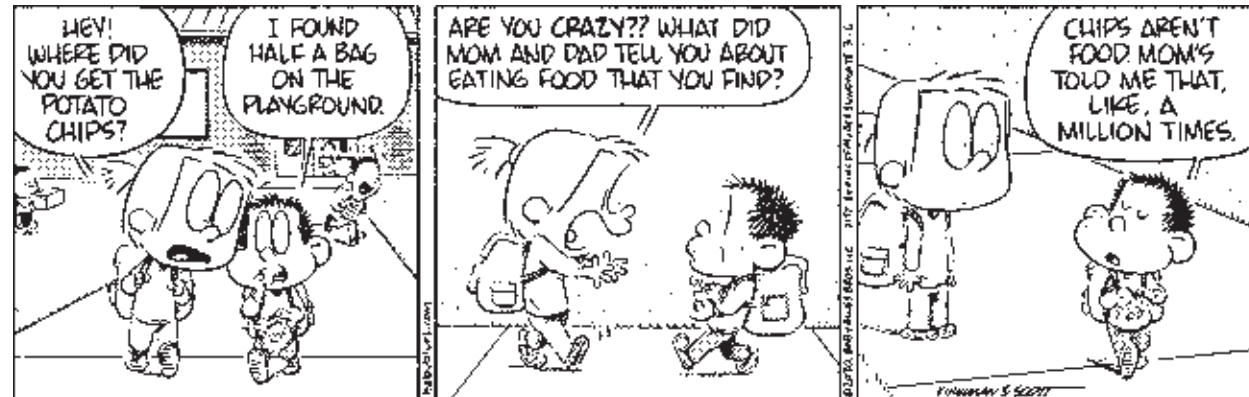
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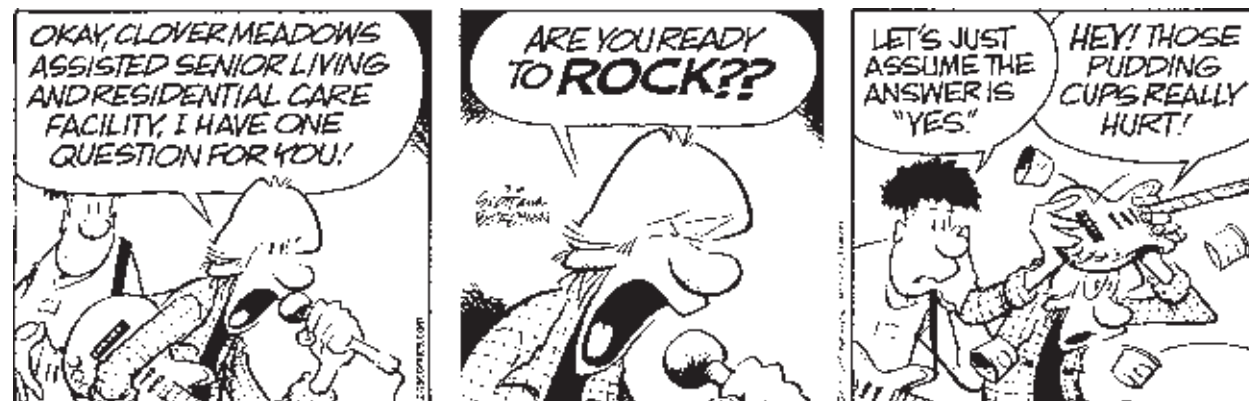
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		2		3		8					
6	1					8	7				
	7	5				9					2
9											6
							3	2			
2			4					9	5		
	3	9									
	6		2			4					

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

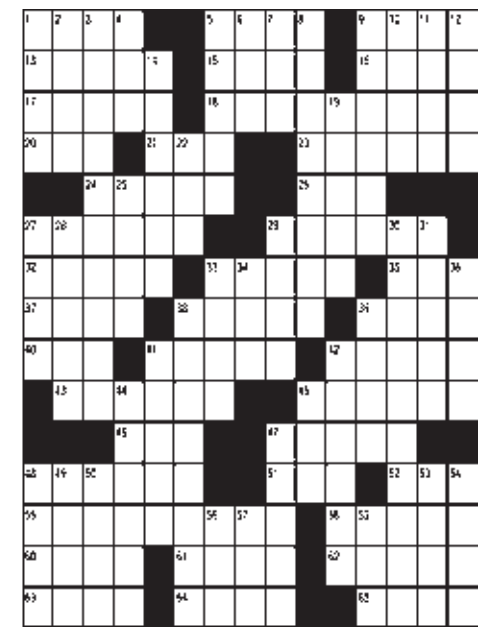
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

4	6	9	1	5	3	8	2	7
2	8	7	9	4	6	5	3	1
5	1	3	7	8	2	6	4	9
1	2	6	3	9	4	7	5	8
8	7	4	2	1	5	3	9	6
3	9	5	8	6	7	2	1	4
6	3	1	5	7	9	4	8	2
7	5	8	4	2	1	9	6	3
9	4	2	6	3	8	1	7	5

- ACROSS**
- Keeps going up and down
 - Winter forecast
 - Nuoge
 - Is and leasts
 - Mary, idle and ...
 - Lois, Day Planet reporter
 - Group of eight
 - Law
 - He resitates s'osi
 - Galloped
 - Samped
 - Sister's daughter
 - Cups edge
 - Atte
 - Neighbor of Ulan
 - Undermay
 - Shut
 - Begley & McManor
 - Asson sh
 - Verchandise
 - Ice alicat on the sea
 - Vargare's nickname
 - Lab bottles
 - Jacques
 - Remember
 - gsaw puzzle bits
 - Everyone
 - Item in a bedding package
 - 12th-century U.S. president
 - A Boy and Dog Don Johnson film
 - Vonnaro & Gore
 - Not of this word
 - Leg bone
 - Sheer, Tusc symbol
 - Green-an-clue
 - Permit
 - Park N.Y. FD's hometown
 - Catch sight of
 - Part of the eye

- DOWN**
- you own; boast
 - Cry from a fu
 - 3 U.S. state capla
 - Gir's nickname
 - G'owed
 - VP Rocke'er's initials
 - Strange
 - Cafe employee
 - Fluid part of the blood
 - and rave; make a scene
 - A single time
 - Owner's document
 - Sesame
 - Innocent
 - Do a disappearing vanish
 - Removes wrinkles
 - Struggle to breathe
 - Run chase
 - off; dozes
 - Yummy
 - Venerate
 - Southe crunks
 - Chal room
 - chuckle
 - Candy store chain
 - Razor maker



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/6/20

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

B	C	D	A	L	O	E	R	S	O	L	E
I	H	A	D	S	I	E	V	E	A	X	E
G	E	N	E	P	A	L	E	D	H	E	A
R	E	P	R	I	M	A	N	D	A	N	D
A	I	R	S	E	A	R					
C	H	A	R	G	E	P	I	N	N	A	C
H	A	L	T	S			L	A	C	E	D
A	I	L	S		F	A	C	E	D	L	I
F	R	I	P	I	N	E	D		R	U	M
E	Y	E	L	I	N	E	R		P	A	R
L	E	I							P	U	N
W	A	S	A		S	P	L	U	R	G	I
A	D	A	M		H	O	O	P	S		
L	A	N	A		E	L	L	I	E		
L	Y	E	S		D	E	A	L	S		

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3/6/20

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A dog is seen at a pet shop in Hong Kong, Thursday, March 5, 2020.

Associated Press

Dogs, cats can't pass on coronavirus, but can test positive

HONG KONG (AP) — Pet cats and dogs cannot pass the new coronavirus on to humans, but they can test positive for low levels of the pathogen if they catch it from their owners.

That's the conclusion of Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department after a dog in quarantine tested weakly positive for the virus Feb. 27, Feb. 28 and March 2, using the canine's nasal and oral cavity samples.

A unidentified spokesman for the department was quoted in a news release as saying, "There is currently no evidence that pet animals can be a source of infection of COVID-19 or that they become sick."

Scientists suspect the virus known as SARS-CoV-2 that causes the disease originated in bats before passing it on to another species, possibly a small wild mammal, that passed it on to humans. However, experts from the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences of the City University of Hong Kong

and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) have unanimously agreed that the dog has a low-level of infection and it is "likely to be a case of human-to-animal transmission."

The dog, and another also in quarantine which has tested negative for the virus, will be tested again before being released. The department suggested any pets, including dogs and cats, from households where someone has tested positive for the virus should be put into quarantine.

In general, pet owners should maintain good hygiene, including washing hands before and after handling animals, their food and supplies and no kissing them. People who are sick should avoid contact with pets and a veterinarian's advice should be sought if changes in a pet's health conditions are detected. "Apart from maintaining good hygiene practices, pet owners need not be overly concerned and under no circumstances should they abandon their pets," the spokesman said. □



Customers look at sanitizing wipes on the shelves of a pharmacy in New York on Wednesday, March 4, 2020.

Associated Press

Science Says: How risky is that virus? Your mind may mislead

By **MALCOLM RITTER**
Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Anna Alexander, a property manager in Virginia Beach, Virginia, started the day Monday thinking that she might avoid shaking hands because of the coronavirus outbreak. Then somebody stuck out a hand to shake. She took it.

"I'm a business person," Alexander, 65, explained. "But if somebody else does it next time, I might try to be careful because of the coronavirus."

As the viral infections spread across the globe, everybody has to make a decision: How worried should I be about getting infected, and what should I do about it?

Those decisions can have wide impacts. "Seriously people — STOP BUYING MASKS!" tweeted U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome M. Adams on Feb. 29. He explained masks aren't effective in protecting the general public "but if healthcare providers can't get them to care for sick patients, it puts them and our communities at risk!"

The right degree of concern for somebody who lives near a coronavirus hotspot might very well differ from that of somebody

who lives far from one. In any case, say experts in how people gauge risk, it's not a simple, cold statistical calculation. Instead, it is colored by our emotions and other psychological factors.

"Emotions are the filters through which we see the facts," says David Ropeik, a retired Harvard instructor on risk communication.

And this virus outbreak presents a list of "hot buttons ... that ramp up our perception of risk" and sometimes make those perceptions differ from the evidence-based conclusions of medical officials, says Paul Slovic, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon.

For example, it's new and unfamiliar, unlike the usual seasonal flu that kills a lot more people every year than coronavirus has. It doesn't appear to be fully understood. And it seems hard to control, either by public health authorities or our own actions.

"We see there is no vaccine that can prevent it," he said. It can spread through airborne droplets released by infected people, but we can't be sure the people we meet are truly healthy, which also undercuts any sense of personal control,

he said.

As Ropeik put it, in the face of a new and poorly understood threat "we start feeling like we don't know what we need to do to protect ourselves, and that feels like powerlessness, a lack of control, like driving down the road but with your eyes closed." Meanwhile, the information people get from the news and social media is "not particularly reassuring," Slovic said. "The geographic risk of this seems to be rapidly expanding" and within any country the case numbers start relatively small and then grow, without any known upper bound, he said. And reports focus on people getting sick and dying, not those who've become infected and had only mild symptoms, he said. "We're getting only the scary information."

What's more, Ropeik said, "everybody is telling everybody about it" in news and social media, which amplifies the perceived risk.

Ropeik said the coronavirus triggers thinking about years of warnings about lethal pandemics. "This idea of the new disease being a major killer is an idea that has been burned into our recent fear memory," he said. □

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Raphael fever hits Italy but art isn't immune from virus

By FRANCES D'EMILIO

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The paintings, drawings, tapestries and sketches in the most ambitious exhibition of Renaissance superstar Raphael's works are collectively insured for 4 billion euros (\$4.4 billion) against theft, vandalism or other damages.

But no money can guarantee that Italy's outbreak of coronavirus, the largest in Europe, won't play havoc with the three-month run in Rome of this year's eagerly-awaited art blockbuster.

Nervousness was palpable at a preview Wednesday that the Italian government's increasingly restrictive measures aimed at containing the outbreak might prematurely shut down the "Raffaello" exhibition, which is being mounted to mark the 500th anniversary of his death.

The project brings together 120 works by Raphael, including from collections ranging from those of Queen Elizabeth II to some of the world's most prestigious museums. Entitled "Raffaello 1520-1483," the exhibition opens Thursday in the Scuderie del Quirinale, an 18th-century former stables converted into an elegant palazzo.

There was reason to be nervous. Italy closed all schools and universities Wednesday and barred fans from all sporting events for nearly the next month to try to tamp down the deadliest coronavirus outbreak outside of China. So far, over 3,000 people have been infected in Italy and 107 of them have died.

On April 6, 1520, at the height of a brilliant career as a painter and architect in Rome, Raphael succumbed, on his 37th birthday, to eight days of fever and was buried in Rome's Pantheon.

Some 40 of the paintings and sketches come from the Uffizi Galleries in Florence, whose director, Eike Schmidt, sought to tamp down apprehension about viewing the show. He stressed that the recommended one-meter (yard)



Visitors take photos of Raphael's painting *Virgin with Child and Infant St. John the Baptist*, at a press preview of Raphael's exhibition in Rome, Wednesday, March 4, 2020.

Associated Press

distance between people in public places would be respected to reduce risks of any contagion and hand sanitizers were affixed to exhibit walls.

He was interviewed in front of one of the show's top draws, "Portrait of Pope Leone X." The painting underwent a painstaking, three-year-restoration that enhanced the rich hues of the scarlet cap and cape of the pontiff, one of Raphael's patrons, and the cardinal-red robes of two cardinals. So exquisite is Raphael's detailing that a silver bell near the pontiff's left hand looks like you could pick it up and ring it. Pausing in front of Raphael's creations — including preparatory sketches as breathtakingly beautiful as the paintings that ensued — viewers feel caught in the gaze of the artists' subjects. Schmidt noted that while Michelangelo was "constantly interested in the anatomy of the human body," and Leonardo da Vinci was "principally interested in the scientific analysis of the world," Raphael's interest "was really the psychology of his sitters" for portraits. Raphael was intent on exploring "how can you express a human character, a soul, through painting, which is very dif-

ficult, if not impossible."

But, Schmidt added, switching to Raphael's Italian name "if anyone came close to do it, that was Raffaello."

Drawings, with ink or red or black chalk, provide ample examples of Raphael's success in infusing human figures with emotion. Two of

Raphael's celebrated portraits have inspired countless musings about the women who posed for a painter known for his lively love life.

One, informally known as "Fornarina," or the baker's daughter, was said to be his mistress and was painted in his last year of life. A

finger on her right hand appears to point to an slim armband on her bare arm with the artist's name. Nearby is "Portrait of a woman called 'La Velata,'" or the veiled woman.

When Italy's COVID-19 outbreak surfaced last month, more than 70,000 tickets had already been sold for the "Raffaello" exhibit.

Organizers on Wednesday said "the number of visitors accessing the halls will be controlled" to dilute the risks of any visitors transmitting the new coronavirus.

But if "Raffaello" was forced to temporarily close its doors or slash entrance numbers, it's be highly unlikely that it could be extended. While the Uffizi has so many Raphael works it could lend 40 and still keep its Raphael room open in the Florence museum, other lending institutions, among them the Prado, the Louvre, the National Gallery in London and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., would be reluctant to deprive for more weeks their own visitors of an opportunity to view their Raphael works in their own collections. □

Kim Kardashian West, former prisoners visit White House

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Kim Kardashian West visited the White House on Wednesday along with three women who had their sentences commuted by President Donald Trump last month, allowing them early release from federal prison. Kardashian West tweeted that she and the women planned to "discuss more change that our justice system desperately needs!"

The three women — Tynice Nichole Hall, Crystal Munoz and Judith Negrón — were nonviolent federal offenders serving long sentences. All had their cases championed by Alice Johnson, a Tennessee grandmother con-

victed on felony drug and money laundering charges in 1996. Johnson was released from prison in June 2018 after Kardashian West asked Trump to grant her clemency.

Johnson said the president had asked her for a list of other women who deserved clemency. Johnson, Hall and Munoz had all had commutation requests denied by then-President Barack Obama. Obama undertook an unprecedented effort to reduce the sentences of nonviolent federal drug offenders during his presidency, releasing 1,715 prisoners, more than any other president in history. Obama repeatedly called on Congress to

pass a broader criminal justice fix, but Republican lawmakers resisted. Trump was able to get more Republicans in the Senate to vote for a criminal justice bill that gave judges more discretion when sentencing some drug offenders and boosted prisoner rehabilitation efforts. Trump has been citing the bill in his efforts to win support from more African American voters. Ivanka Trump tweeted a photo of herself and husband Jared Kushner with the women during Wednesday's visit, saying "these 3 mothers were granted clemency by @realDonaldTrump last month and are already using their second chance to pay it forward!" □

Review: In 'Onward,' a weird but worthy Pixar magic act



In this image released by Disney/Pixar, characters Laurel, voiced by Julia Louis-Dreyfus, from left, Ian, voiced by Tom Holland, and Barley, voiced by Chris Pratt, appear in a scene from "Onward."

Associated Press

By JAKE COYLE

For a revolutionary animation studio, Pixar has been surprisingly wary of advancing technology. The company may be at the forefront of digital animation, but for 25 years, its spiritual DNA has been decidedly nostalgic. It's the old-school new school.

In "WALL-E," high-tech humans have devolved into overweight TV addicts who need to be jarred out of their stupor. In "Monsters Inc.," modern kids have grown too blasé to be scared by monsters, prompting a scream shortage. "Cars" preached small-town, off-the-beaten-track values.

Pixar's latest, "Onward," goes even further. "Long ago, the world was full of wonder," a narrator introduces. There were magical creatures like trolls, gnomes, elves and dragons with special powers. But the drumbeat of progress, from light bulbs to airplanes to smart phones, has steadily sapped all the fantasy from life. In New Mushroomton, a Los Angeles-like sprawl of suburbs and freeways, those once magical creatures live an orderly and predictable life much like our own, just with unicorns always getting in the trash and pixies that ride in biker gangs.

The set-up is quintessentially Pixar, even if "Onward" — with its blueish, pointed-eared elves in flannel shirts and '70s-style anthems — nearly resembles Pixar's answer to prog rock. This is one of the studio's odder looking films, one that owes much more to Dungeons & Dragons and the rock-geek exuberance of Jack Black than your typical animated feature.

"Onward," written and directed by Dan Scanlon ("Monsters University"), may initially be a tough sell,

and it's not a movie likely to immediately rise to the top of everyone's Pixar's rankings. ("Ratatouille" forever.) But its eccentric odyssey of two brothers delving into a fantastical past to find their way through grief and self-doubt is a worthy addition to the studio's canon. Its world is a little incongruous (one wants to unsee the centaur police officer), and the movie's depiction of death isn't so well honed as it is in, say, "Up" or "Toy Story 3." But "Onward" makes the most of its strange assemblage to tell a sweet and moving story — enough so to leave you yet again shaking your head at Pixar's magic act. Ian Lightfoot (voiced by Tom Holland) is an elf in high school with typical teenage problems. He's turning 16, a passage into young adulthood that for Ian is filled with angst and anxiety. His lack of self confidence is only the more worrisome to him when he hears that his late father, whose death came before Ian was born, was an impressively "bold" man. Ian makes a "new me" list with the entry: "Be more like Dad." He lives with his mother, Laurel (Julia Louis-Dreyfus), and older brother, Barley (Chris Pratt). Barley drives a beat-up purple van with a winged horse decal and a cassette-tape deck; he's nicknamed the van Guinevere. (You will leave "Onward" swearing that someone owes Jack Black money.) Clad in a denim vest and spiked wristband, Barley doesn't appear headed toward grand success in life, but he's an affectionately enthusiastic brother to Ian and a young man with passionate tastes. He's an aficionado of the role-playing game Quest of Yore, and an ardent defender of artifacts from the past. To style-

mie developers, he melodramatically chains himself to magical relics.

The adventure of the movie kicks off when Ian opens a gift left for him by his father (voiced by Bryan Cranston): a staff and spell that will bring Ian's dad back for a day. Ian only half finishes the trick: His father returns as just a pair of slacks and dress shoes. In a race to beat the next day's sunset, the kids tow their half-formed father on an odyssey in search of a crystal for another chance at the spell. A pair of elves with a half-resurrected dead dad is, unquestionably, esoteric territory for even Pixar. When Ian gives him a pillow torso, shirt and shades, the effect is a little like "Weekend at Bernie's." And yet, "Onward" still works. As they hunt from place to place, the elves' quest reawakens long dormant pools of magic. Pressured by insurance companies and Yelp reviews, a manticore (Octavia Spencer) begins to question turning her lair into a TGI Fridays-like restaurant.

In a series of such encounters, Ian gradually grows more courageous; the movie isn't as unconventional as it seems. But "Onward" pivots, movingly. It turns out to be more about brotherly love than anything else. As a Pixar entry, it may be the first to explicitly grapple with not the trials of childhood, but the fraught onset of adulthood. Either way, by the time "Onward" has wrapped its journey, it will probably be the only movie with a manticore to make you cry.

"Onward," a Walt Disney Co. release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for action/peril and some mild thematic elements. Running time: 103 minutes. Three stars out of four. □

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Winfrey and Cummins talk “American Dirt” and lessons learned

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Everything about her latest book club pick, “American Dirt,” was a surprise for Oprah Winfrey. Praised early on as a modern version of “The Grapes of Wrath,” Jeanine Cummins’ novel about a Mexican mother and child fleeing to the U.S. border was strongly criticized by those who accused her of perpetuating stereotypes about Mexicans. The controversy also highlighted the lack of diversity in publishing.

For a taped forum on the novel, Winfrey and Cummins were joined by three critics of the book, and the discussion ran so long that the finished broadcast on Apple TV Plus will be roughly 2 hours, double the usual time for one of her book club programs.

The Associated Press was allowed to attend last month’s taping at a studio in Tucson, Arizona, where Cummins wrote and researched part of the novel. The AP later spoke with Winfrey and Cummins in an upstairs conference room. Here are highlights from the AP interview:

On how Winfrey and Cummins felt about the show, which also featured interviews with immigrants from Central America:

Winfrey: I felt that it was as balanced as you can be in 2 hours and 40 minutes. In the middle of taping, I was, like, having anxiety, because I knew how many other stories I had to get in and realized I’m not going to be able to tell all those stories. And it’s so important not to cut people in a way that makes them feel that they were not heard. And, so, the producer comes up and tells me that Apple’s agreed to allow this to be two hours. So, then, I actually relaxed.

Cummins: I’m so grateful to Oprah for being the one to facilitate this conversation, because it was terrifying to walk in there knowing that I was going to, potentially, be called upon to defend my book, which is not a thing any writer wants to do ever, under any circum-



In this Feb. 13, 2020 photo, Oprah Winfrey, left, and “American Dirt” author Jeanine Cummins appear in a conference room just above Modern Studios in Tucson, Ariz., where they taped an Oprah’s Book Club show about Cummins’ controversial book.

Associated Press

stances. And, in fact, I felt like that conversation was productive. It was civil. I really understood where they were coming from, the women who were there in opposition to the book. I hope that they also understood where I was coming from.

On how the recent controversy will change how Winfrey chooses books for her club:

Winfrey: I’m very interested in these conversations continuing. I will be a part of helping them continue if I think that I can contribute something of value and of meaning. ... And now that we’ve had this moment in the culture, I will now open myself up to more Latinx books.

We do the same thing, I think, you know, other book clubs are doing — you’re seeing what’s coming up, what’s new, when are the new releases. And I just said to Leigh (O Magazine books editor Leigh Haber) the other day, “We should start looking at other books that didn’t do so well.”

How the recent controversy will make Winfrey look

more closely at the publishing industry and at the writers she picks:

Winfrey: It has not been a concern of mine, or of interest to me, who is publishing the book. ... “Oh, I chose three Random House books in a row,” or “I chose the Harper’s (HarperCollins) book and then I chose another Harper’s book.” That has never been the (focus). I just really go on “Do I like the book?” and “What is the book?” And, now, I will pay more attention to that. I will also pay more attention to who is writing it. This has actually caused me to pause about who’s writing it: Am I going to have to spend the next two months defending the writer, defending the writer’s right to write the book, or can we actually talk about the story?

I’m not going to play it safer, but I’m not going to wade

into water if I don’t have to. I don’t have to wade into water and drown if I don’t have to, because, you know, this has taken up a lot of my energy, a lot of her (Cummins’) energy, and it’s taken the attention away from the real reason I want people to read books.

On whether it had occurred to Cummins that having her book compared to “The Grapes of Wrath” might lead to a backlash:

Cummins: No. I didn’t (realize). I mean, it was all so exciting to me. You know? I was so overwhelmed. I was a writer who came from the lower-mid list and was having the moment of my life.

On how the criticism of Cummins reminded Winfrey of an experience in her own life:

Winfrey: As a young report-

er I remember moving to Baltimore and them doing this whole big campaign on “What is an Oprah?” that ended up flopping, because I couldn’t live up to what the promos and publicity were. So, by the time I actually ended up ... on the air, they were like, “Oh, it’s just a black girl with a lot of hair.” And there were people mispronouncing my name and all that stuff. So, I couldn’t live up to it. So, I learned from that, as you (Cummins) are now going to learn from this. I learned from that. When I moved to Chicago, I said, “I don’t want a billboard, not a word, not a bus stop, not a bumper sticker — I want nothing. I want to go on the air. I want to do whatever I’m going to do. And, by word of mouth, people will hear about it and they will know. I don’t want anybody talking about it or talking me up or saying anything.” And I’ve operated from that since, you know?

Cummins: That takes a tremendous amount of self-confidence, as well.

Winfrey: Well, it also take being burned.

On how the response to “American Dirt” might affect whatever Cummins writes next:

Cummins: Right now, the thing that I’m most worried about or most invested in as a writer is making sure that I don’t lose my own voice. You know? And making sure that the experience of this moment doesn’t make me second guess or subvert the stories that move in my heart. So, I’m not sure what those stories will be yet. ... But, to be sure, what’s happened over the last three weeks has had an impact on my heart and, potentially, on what story may grow in there next. □



Food stamp change fuels anxiety as states try to curb impact

By **SOPHIA TAREEN**

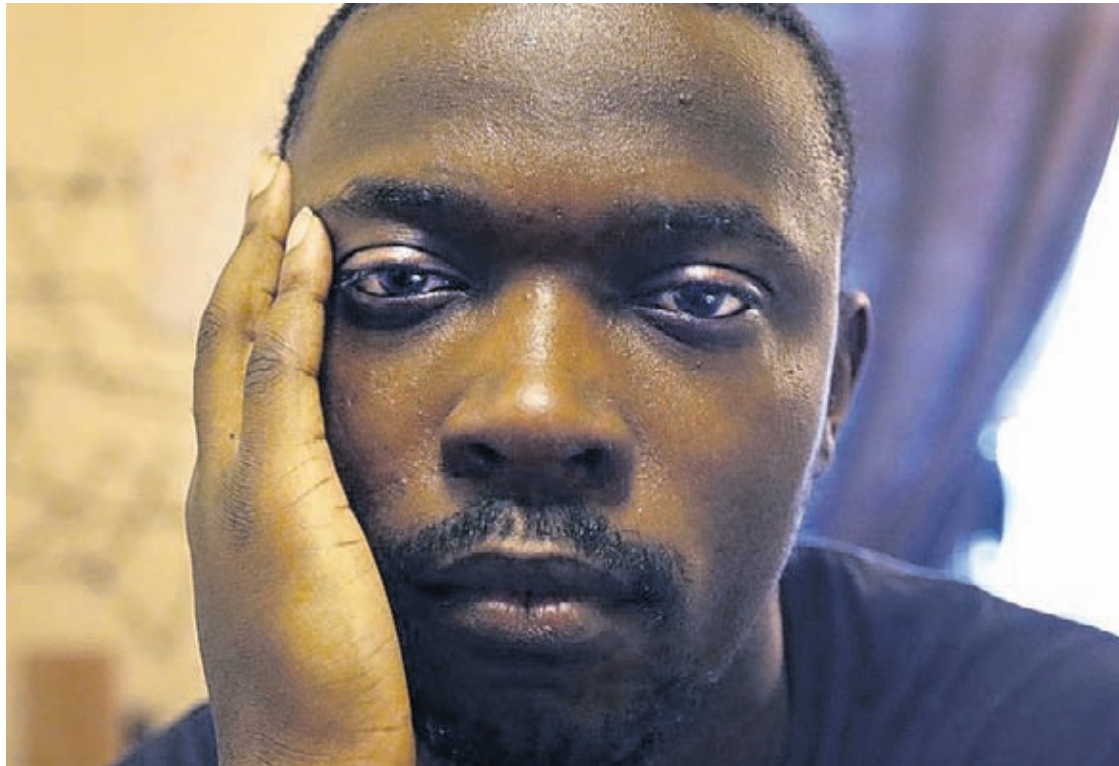
CHICAGO (AP) — Having food stamps offers Richard Butler a stability he's rarely known in his 25 years. He was in state custody at age 2, spent his teen years at a Chicago boys' home and jail for burglary, and has since struggled to find a permanent home.

The \$194 deposited monthly on his benefits card buys fresh produce and meat.

"It means the world to me," said Butler, who shares a one-bedroom apartment with two others. "We can go without a lot of things, like phones and music. We can't go without eating."

But that stability is being threatened for people like Butler, who are able-bodied, without dependents and between the ages 18 and 49. New Trump administration rules taking effect April 1 put hundreds of thousands of people in his situation at risk of losing their benefits. They hit particularly hard in places like Illinois, which also is dealing with a separate, similar change in the nation's third-largest city.

From Hawaii to Pennsylvania, states are scrambling to blunt the impact of the new rules, with roughly 700,000 people at risk of losing benefits unless they meet certain work, training or school requirements. They've filed a multi-state lawsuit, expanded publicly funded job training, developed pilot programs and doubled down efforts to reach vulnerable communities, including the homeless, rural residents and



In this Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, photo, Richard Butler poses for a portrait in an apartment that a friend is letting him and his fiancée live in on Chicago's Southside.

Associated Press

people of color.

Social service agencies say they won't be able to fill the gap, making increased homelessness and more hospital visits among the biggest concerns. Experts say they've already seen troubling signs in some states.

"This is a cascading effect," said Robert Campbell, managing director at Feeding America, a network of hundreds of food banks nationwide. "It will increase demands on the emergency food system, food banks and pantries." Richard Butler and his fiancée, Amber, laugh while they have breakfast in an apartment a friend is letting them live in on Chicago's Southside. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

Currently, work-eligible, able-bodied adults without dependents under 50 can receive monthly benefits if they meet a 20-hour weekly work, job training or school requirement. Those who don't are limited to three months of food stamps over three years.

However, states with high unemployment or few jobs have been able to waive time limits. Every state except Delaware has sought a waiver at some point, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The new rules make it harder to get waivers. They're the first of three changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which feeds 36 million people nationwide. The Trump administration has touted the change as a way to get people working and save \$5.5 billion over five years. Able-bodied adults without dependents are 7% of SNAP recipients. But states fighting the change say that argument is misguided.

"Not everyone is in a position to get a job tomorrow, and taking away access to food is only going to make that more difficult," said Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Secretary Teresa Miller. "We're going to have more hungry

people in the state."

Pennsylvania — where as many as 100,000 people could be affected — is working with social services groups to create 30 job training programs for SNAP recipients.

However, experts say work opportunities are limited. More than half of SNAP recipients have a high school diploma, but about one-quarter have less, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available jobs are more likely to have low pay, shifting schedules that might not offer enough qualifying hours and few benefits like paid sick leave.

"Work requirements really don't really do much to affect the rate at which people are working," said Elaine Waxman at the Ur-

ban Institute, a nonprofit research organization. "If people can work and consistently, they pretty much are."

Some states are focusing on rural areas, which have less access to transportation and services.

Hawaii, for instance, wants to develop a pilot program to help 400 Molokai residents keep benefits. The rural island once had a waiver because of high unemployment, but the new rules assign Molokai to the same job market as nearby, more prosperous Maui, even though a 30-minute plane ride is the only way to travel between the islands.

The program would use education, training and volunteering to fulfill the work requirement. It's modeled after similar programs used in remote Alaska, which is seeking waivers for less-populated areas. Roughly 5,000 in Alaska could lose benefits.

Attorneys general in nearly 20 states and Washington, D.C., have sued to block the rules. They argue the changes will force people to divert their limited funds, leading to homelessness and health problems.

People with food insecurity spend 45% more on medical care annually than those who are food secure, according to a 2018 report by the nonprofit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Experts say critics' worries are founded and point to Kentucky as a case study. Like a handful of states, Kentucky has voluntarily instated time limits for SNAP benefits since 2017. □



In this Jan. 29, 2020, photo, chef Samara Henderson checks a lunch order paper at Inspiration Kitchens in Chicago.

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This Jan. 29, 2020, photo shows a sign on a table at Inspiration Kitchens in Chicago.

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